LATTER-DAY GRACE: COMPARING JUSTIFYING GRACE IN LATTER-DAY SAINT AND TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

LATTER-DAY GRACE: COMPARING JUSTIFYING GRACE IN LDS AND TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Loren Pankratz

Two roadblocks to effective evangelization of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) are: 1) Lack of Christian involvement in evangelism to LDS members; 2) Distinctions between the gospels of LDS and traditional Christian theology are lost due to surface/structural similarities. This project exposes the deep differences between justifying grace (how we get eternal life) in the LDS and traditional Christian faith. For the LDS, faith in Jesus' work is necessary, but not sufficient, for eternal life, whereas, in traditional Christian theology, faith in Christ is necessary and sufficient for eternal life. Based on this distinction, the researcher has developed a method for training Christians and evangelizing LDS members such that Christians are more likely to evangelize to LDS members and LDS members are more likely to hear the gospel clearly as they learn the distinct positions each faith holds regarding justifying grace.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and its Setting

Following the war of 1812, the United States entered a period of "rapidly shifting social standards and institutional life."[1] Colonial traditions, with their status and clout, fell to pieces in an "age of the common man."[2] Evangelical revivalism swept the country and, with it, "new measures" were adopted that challenged the traditional churches. This revivalism emphasized personal experience and attacked the hierarchies, learned professors, and cold-formalism of the previous age.[3]

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[1] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale, 1972), 474.

[2] Ibid., 475.

[3] Leland Jamison, "Religions on the American Perimeter," *The Shaping of American Religion* 1, ed. A. Leland Jamison and James Ward Smith (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). Jamison shows four emphases of nineteenth-century American religion: 1) Perfectionism, 2) Millennialism, 3) Universalism, 4) Illuminism (some "new light" or further revelation of God's purpose). Interestingly, these four emphases can be found in Mormonism.

Upstate New York was a microcosm of what the nation was like as a whole. New social and religious movements were sprouting up everywhere, and people were reporting visions and revelations from God at break neck speed.[4] Among the many sectarian movements of the day, many of which occurred in upstate New York, sociologist Peter Berger notes a predominance of three motifs: 1) Enthusiastic (an experience to be lived); 2) Prophetic (a message to be proclaimed); 3) Gnostic (a secret to be divulged).[5] These motifs hit the nail on the head for many nineteenth-century religious movements, with Mormonism being a primary example.

Joseph Smith, though born in Vermont, grew up in an area so saturated with religious enthusiasm and revivalism that it has been dubbed "the burned over district."[6] Religious upheaval and social unrest were at peak levels, and led to great surges in some Protestant groups, as well as the creation of new "unconventional" movements like the Shakers, Millerites, and the Oneida

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[4] Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 41.

[5] Peter Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," *Social Research* (Winter 1954): 467-485.

[6] Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*, (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1950). *See also* Gordon S. Wood, "Evangelical American and Early Mormonism," *New York History* 61 (October 1980): 359-86.

Perfectionists, among others.[7] The young Joseph Smith Jr. was confused by all the revivals and apparent discord between Christian denominations. Though he seemed to have an affinity for the Methodist movement and had been influenced deeply at a Methodist camp meeting in the woods near his home,[8] Smith longed for a clear indication from God as to which church was right and he struggled to know how to be saved.[9]

Evading the clamor of the home, Smith escaped into the woods to pray and seek wisdom from the Lord as to which church was the right church in order that he might know he had God's forgiveness. In those woods, Smith claims to have had a revelation in which he received much more than a confirmation of his

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[7] D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998). D. Michael Quinn adds folk magic to the list of influencing features in rural New York. He notes that numerology, healing objects, alchemy, and other forms of occult and magic were "in the air" in nineteenth-century rural New York.

[8] Bushman, 37. Smith is reported to have caught "a spark of Methodism in the camp meeting, away down in the woods, on the Vienna road," and to have joined the probationary class of the Palmyra Methodist Church. See also Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Book Company, 1980), vol. 1:3.

[9] Bushman, 38.

forgiveness.[10] God and Jesus reportedly appeared to Smith and told him all the denominations were an abomination and all the professors of the denominations were corrupt.[11] Smith claimed to have been directed to join none of the existing churches and, instead, he should wait to receive guidance in establishing the Lord's true church on the earth. This true church that would be established was not described as a new church; rather, it was a restoration and renewing of Christ's mission.[12]

In time, Smith claimed he was led by visions to the location of gold plates containing the record of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. Joseph Smith claimed to have eventually unearthed these plates and, with the "help and power of God,"[13] translate them into English, thereby producing the Book of Mormon,

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[10] There is a problem in determining the actual form and content of the "First Vision." Smith himself varied the details a great deal over time, and others whom Smith had confided in retold his vision story with great variance to the official story (as published in the Pearl of Great Price). For the LDS interpretation of this quandary, see Richard L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith's Testimony of the First Vision," *Ensign* (April 1996).

[11] Smith, History, 1:19. See also *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 1 Nephi 14:10.

[12] Richard Bushman*, Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), 4-5.

[13] *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 135:3. This work is abbreviated by "D&C."

which was published in 1830. This text formed the foundation upon which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) was founded.

Smith's new brand of religion seemed to resonate with the religious seekers of his day. His abhorrence of the doctrine of predestination and his own universalistic leanings worked toward "banishing the notion of eternal conscious punishment in a place of unfathomable torment,"[14] which likely helped his new religious movement gain traction. As Nathan Hatch has pointed out, like other frontier religious movements, Mormonism provided a sense of empowerment to ordinary folk. In fact, he argues that Mormonism is a prime example of the "democratization of American Christianity," which was characteristic of American religion in the first half of the nineteenth century.[15]

There was, in nineteenth-century America, a widespread public interest in

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[14] Craig J. Hazen, "The Apologetic Impulse in Early Mormonism," in *The New Mormon Challenge*, ed. Francis Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 45.

[15] Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 113-122. Hatch finds preaching in the vernacular and a blurring of the distinction between clergy and laity to be key features of religion around the Second Great Awakening. Mormonism, while holding on to a hierarchical leadership model, placed lay members with little, if any, training into those hierarchical positions.

the subject of the American Indian's origins,[16] and Smith's book offered an explanation that was both religiously satisfying and, at the time, unfalsifiable.[17]

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[16] LDS Apostle B.H. Roberts notes that Smith's linkage of the American Indians to Israel was not original and that, in fact, Ethan Smith's book, *View of the Hebrews*, had already undergone two editions by 1825 and were "either possessed by Joseph Smith or certainly known by him. Roberts also notes that Josiah Priest, *The Wonders of Nature and Providence* (1824), among others, had made this connection as well. See B.H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 152-53.

[17] Modern DNA testing has raised substantial problems for Book of Mormon claims regarding the origin of the Native Americans. This researcher first learned researchers had linked Native American DNA to a single population in Asia in December of 2007 when news magazine *The Week*, covered the story of a University of Michigan study that had confirmed the link (*The Week*, December 14th, 2007). Below are several recent studies that argue for the Asian (read non-Hebrew) descent of Native Americans: Kari B. Schroeder *et al.*, "Haplotypic Background of a Private Allele at High Frequency in the Americas," *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 26, no. 5 (2009): 995-1016; Ripan S. Malhi and Daved G. Smith, "Brief Communication: Haplogroup X Confirmed in Prehistoric North America," in *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 119 (September 2002): 84-86; Fagundes *et al*., "Mitochondrial Population Genomics Supports a Single Pre-Clovis Origin with a Costal Rout for the Peopling of the Americas," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 82 (March 2008). Linguistics studies support this DNA research. See Merritt Ruhlen, "The Origin of the Na-Dene," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 95 (November 1998): 13994-13996. The LDS church has sponsored a number of responses, some of which can be found at the LDS Church's website, www.newsroom.lds.org/article/dna-and-the-book-of-mormon; accessed 30 November 2011. One strategy, propagated by F.A.I.R., is to push for a limited geography of the Book of Mormon lands and to cast doubt on DNA evidence. For this approach, see John M. Butler, "Addressing Questions Surrounding the Book of Mormon and DNS Research," FARMS Review 18, Issue 1 (2006): 101-108. A recent publication attempts to carve out the possibility of space for a small amount of non-Asian genetics within the genes of the Native Americans. For this approach, see Ugo A. Perego, "The Book of Mormon and the Origin of Native Americans from a Maternally Inherited DNA Standpoint," in *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues*, ed. Robert Millet (Provo: Brigham Young University, 2011). Another strategy in dealing with the DNA evidence

Further adding to the early popularity and plausibility of Mormonism, "the god of Joseph Smith was not a threat to human potential but a being who gloried in that potential and whose work was to bring it to fruition. That was why Smith's message resonated and caught hold like a burning fire."[18]

Unlike other Christian sectarian movements, Mormonism did not base its uniqueness on any particular idiosyncratic interpretation of the Bible. Rather, it embraced new scripture and came to see Joseph Smith as more than a gifted interpreter; he was a prophet, following in the footsteps of the Old Testament prophets. So, in some respects, Mormonism is at home in its nineteenth-century religious environment. It appealed to the "common man," claimed a new and exciting movement of God was afoot, and answered many questions many Americans were asking. And yet, in other ways Mormonism stands apart from other religious movements of the early nineteenth-century generally, and

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against a Middle Eastern descent of the American Indians, seen in the 2004 Doubleday edition of the Book of Mormon, is changing the strength of the relation between the Laminates and Native Americans. In this recent edition, the Laminates are said to be "among the ancestors" of the Native Americans, while all earlier version have the much stronger claim that the Laminates are the "principal ancestors" of the Native Americans.

[18] Terryl L. Givens, "Lightning Out of Heaven," *BYU Studies* 45, no. 1 (2006): 19.

nineteenth-century revivalist Christianity particularly.[19] LDS theology, with its emphases on revelation and open canon, was headed on a trajectory that would lead the LDS church away from existing alongside traditional Christianity. While some may argue exactly when that decisive break took place (first vision, publication of Book of Mormon, or King Follett discourse), the researcher would argue that by the 1836 dedication of the Kirtland temple, Mormonism had come out from under the umbrella of mainstream American Protestantism.[20] While this trajectory was charted at the birth of the church, the dedication of that first temple marks the intentional establishment of the LDS church as an organization that alone mediates God's presence and can dispense God's blessing and authority.

Since its inception in 1830, the LDS church has grown tremendously and now boasts over fourteen million members worldwide, with over fifty thousand

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[19] Nathan Jones, "The Kirtland Pentecost: Early Mormon Temple Worship in the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Revivalism" (Master's Thesis, California State University, Fresno, 2009)., 63-82. Jones argues for three major differences between Mormon Temple worship and evangelical revivalism: 1) Revivalism focused on preaching, while Mormonism focused on ritual; 2) What ritual revivalism did have was pragmatic (to make converts), whereas Mormonism's ritual was reverent and supposedly linked to ancient (Solomon's Temple) ritual; 3) Revivalism pushed toward a blurring of worlds (clergy and laity), whereas Temple Mormonism centered around hierarchy.

[20] Jones, *The Kirtland Pentacost*, 38.

full-time missionaries.[21] Though several books have been published recently aimed at opening lines of communication between traditional Christian and LDS members,[22] significant barriers to real evangelism seem to remain.[23] As a fervent believer in Jesus Christ, the researcher recognizes the great need for those outside His fold to be reconciled to Him. Thus, the researcher desires open and honest communication with LDS members – especially as it relates to evangelism.

While the LDS church parted ways with its protestant predecessor in the 1830's, it did not shed all of its family resemblances. Thus, a question that seems to come up time and time again in discussions between Evangelicals and

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[21] In his General Conference report, Brook P. Hales, Secretary to the First Presidency, marked total LDS church membership to be 14,131,467, and the number of full-time missionaries serving to be 52,225, as of the end of 2010. See Brook P. Hales, "Statistical Report, 2010," Ensign (November 2011): 29.

[22] Examples include Robert Millet and Greg Johnson, *Bridging the Divide: The Continuing Conversation between a Mormon and an Evangelical* (Rhineveck, NY: Monkfish Book Publishing, 2007); C.L. Blomberg and S.E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide: A Mormon & an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1997).

[23] I am borrowing the term, "traditional Christians," from Robert Millet. See his introduction in *Modern Mormonism: Myths and Realities* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2010), xv.

LDS members is, “Are Mormons Christian?”[24] This is a natural question because Mormonism and traditional Christianity share many similarities: their moral commitments are akin, they both view the Old and New Testaments as scripture,[25] and they share a close doctrinal vocabulary. Further, both LDS and Christian theologians are comfortable speaking of being saved by grace through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. In fact, the LDS church claims to be the Church of ***Jesus Christ*** of Latter-day Saints; how could it not be a Christian church if it is Jesus Christ’s church?[26]

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[24] This questions often gets air time when Christians dialogue with LDS theologians, either at a popular or scholarly level, and has received much attention in books and journals relating to LDS and Christian beliefs. See *The New Mormon Challenge*; David Paulsen’s “Are Christians Mormon,” *BYU Studies*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2006); Stephen Robinson’s *Are Mormons Christians?;* Robert Millet’s, “A Different Jesus?; *How Wide the Divide*, eds. C. Blomberg and S. Robinson; etc.

[25] LDS theology does not generally have as high a view of the Bible as traditional Christianity. Latter-day saints are willing to grant it authority, “insofar as it was correctly translated.” There is, thus, a built-in suspicion of the Bible, and a preference for distinctive Latter-day scripture. This view persists in spite of the fact that, as Craig Blomberg points out, “we have a relatively unbroken history of the transmission of the New Testament text that does not leave sizable enough gaps for sweeping changes to have been made in the copying of its documents.” See Craig Blomberg, “Is Mormonism Christian,” in *The New Mormon Challenge*, ed. Francis Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 321.

[26] As a point of fact, Latter-day Saints do not mean that Mormons believe precisely the same things as Christians who stem from the historic branches of Christianity (Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant). Rather, they claim their church is a restoration of original Christianity as Jesus and the Apostles taught it prior to the great apostasy when “real” Christian teaching was wiped from the

Consider this statement made by current LDS Apostle Jeffery R. Holland, given at General Conference in 2007,

> Now, to anyone within the sound of my voice who has wondered regarding our Christianity, I bear this witness. I testify that Jesus Christ is the literal, living Son of our literal, living God. This Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer who, under the guidance of the Father, was the Creator of heaven and earth and all things that in them are. I bear witness that He was born of a virgin mother, that in His lifetime He performed mighty miracles observed by legions of His disciples and by His enemies as well. I testify that He had power over death because He was divine but that He willingly subjected Himself to death for our sake because for a period of time He was also mortal. I declare that in His willing submission to death He took upon Himself the sins of the world, paying an infinite price for every sorrow and sickness, every heartache and unhappiness from Adam to the end of the world. In doing so He conquered both the grave physically and hell spiritually and set the human family free. I bear witness that He was literally resurrected from the tomb and, after ascending to His Father to complete the process of that Resurrection, He appeared, repeatedly, to hundreds of disciples in the Old World and in the New. I know He is the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah who will one day come again in final glory, to reign on earth as Lord of lords and King of kings. I know that there is no other name given under heaven whereby a man can be saved and that only by relying wholly upon His merits, mercy, and everlasting grace can we gain eternal life.[27]

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earth. This claim itself, when scrutinized, appears to be untenable. As Craig Blomberg points out, "the amount and suddenness of transformation required to defend the Mormon view of apostasy simply cannot be elicited from the ancient sources available to us." See Blomberg, 318.

[27] Jeffery R. Holland, "The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent," *Ensign* (November 2007). Consider also Robert Milllet's statement, "The central, saving doctrine is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of humankind; that He lived, taught, healed, suffered and died for our sins; and that He rose from the dead the third day with an immortal, resurrected body." Millet and Johnson, *Bridging the Divide*, 131.

Aside from espousing Jesus' visit to the "New World," there is virtually nothing about this confession an evangelical Christian would not happily endorse.

One problem with the close structural similarity between the LDS church and traditional Christianity is that many Christians engage LDS member on "doctrinal issues in the same way that they engage fellow Christians on in-house disputes."[28] That is, despite the real gulf that separates Mormonism and traditional Christianity, many Christians assume that because there are so many commonalities in vocabulary and morality, our disagreements are only about secondary issues.[29] There is, on the surface, such a degree of similarity that the majority of Americans, and American Christians, have concluded that Mormonism is just another branch of Christianity.[30]

While much has been written regarding the doctrinal differences between Christian and LDS theology as it pertains to God, Christ, Man, and the afterlife,[31]

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[28] Carl Mosser and Paul Owen, "Mormonism," in *To Everyone An Answer*, ed. Francis Beckwith (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 325-326.

[29] Ibid., 326-327. Similarly, LDS members find it hard to see how they could be anything other than Christian.

[30] "Public Expresses Mixed Views of Islam, Mormonism," Pew Research Center, September 27th, 2007. The study found that 52% of Americans think that Mormons are Christians. More shockingly, 49% of Protestants and 52% of Catholics said they think Mormons are Christians.

[31] Among the myriad of books on these issues, the following stand out as excellent examples: *The New Mormon Challenge*; *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature books, 1993).

very little has been written regarding the different understandings of grace in LDS and Christian theology.[32] While some Christian evangelization aims at discrediting Joseph Smith and some of the uniquely LDS doctrines mentioned above, the researcher believes that focusing on justifying grace, the grace we need to obtain the fullness of salvation, will allow Christians to present the gospel clearly and effectively. This is important to the researcher personally as he ministers in a community that is highly saturated with LDS. The church he pastors will not grow if Christians do not share the hope that they have in Jesus and if LDS members do not hear the gospel. Thus, there is a need for a method of evangelism that will help to communicate gospel truth in a way that overcomes communication barriers.

This project represents an attempt to craft an evangelistic methodology that will: 1) Increase the propensity of Christians to evangelize LDS members; and 2) Increase LDS members' comprehension of the differences between the LDS and traditional Christian views of justifying grace. If Christians are going to minister effectively to LDS members in Utah, and in the world at large, they need to become effective at holding out the true gospel of grace to LDS members. Increased comprehension of the distinctive natures of LDS and traditional

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[32] Blake Ostler's article in Dialogue (Spring 1991) and Matthew B. Brown's book, *The Plan of Salvation: Understanding our Divine Origin and Destiny* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2002) are notable examples of writing on the subject.

Christian views of justifying grace are important because many LDS members have either such an impoverished understanding of traditional Christianity's gospel of grace that they would never embrace such a view, or they fail to see any distinction and do not see the gospels as different. It is hoped that as Christians are empowered and encouraged to share the gospel, many LDS members would hear the gospel clearly and would eventually turn to the true and living God for salvation.

To accomplish the first goal, the researcher has created a presentation to share with Christians that will train them in how to share the grace of God with clarity. The hope is that with this training, Christians will be more apt to share their faith with LDS members.

In order to accomplish the second goal, the researcher will need to spell out his understanding of what official LDS theology teaches with regard to justifying grace. To accomplish this, LDS theology will be placed in its historical context and the development of its doctrine of grace will be traced along with how it impacts the eternity of LDS adherents. It is also important to understand that the LDS church does not speak unilaterally. Church leaders and authorities have a strong voice, and it is their voice that shapes the history of doctrines; however, some BYU professors and influential LDS members have published books aimed at re-defining terms and staking new positions on topics relating to grace and salvation. Both of these strands of LDS theology will need to be examined in

order to develop a way to explain the gospel that will cut through the divergent streams of LDS thought.

Throughout this paper, it will be clear that the LDS view of justifying grace does not correspond with orthodox Christian belief. By elucidating the LDS beliefs about justification for Christians and LDS members, Christians will be better equipped to understand the substantial differences between the two religions and will, therefore, be better able to evangelize LDS members. Moreover, LDS members will see the distinction between traditional Christian justifying grace and the grace the LDS church claims God offers. To meet these goals, in Chapter 2, the researcher will sketch out a Christian view of justifying grace, which will serve as a sparring partner for the LDS view of grace that will be developed in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 will look to the development of justifying grace in the LDS church from its foundation to its Neo-Orthodox re-definitions. To be clear about the researcher's intentions, the goal of this study is *not* simply to highlight differences, but rather to aid in mutual appreciation and understanding. The researcher agrees with Ross Anderson, who said, "Any understanding gained through dialogue must always be seen as being in the service of evangelism."[33]

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[33] Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson, "Bridge or the Beehive," in *The Christian Research Journal* 30, no. 4 (2007): 27.

After detailing the LDS view of justifying grace, it will be clear that the LDS means of salvation is different than traditional Christianity's means of salvation. At the beginning of Chapter 3, important definitional issues will be dealt with regarding what "eternal life" and "salvation" mean according to LDS theology. Following that section, it will be shown that, according to LDS theology, grace is necessary but insufficient for eternal life, whereas, in traditional Christianity, God's grace received by faith is necessary and sufficient for eternal life. The end result of this is that faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice is not enough for eternal life in LDS theology. Highlighting this distinction will help LDS members hear the true gospel of grace.

After isolating key differences in Christian and LDS doctrine, the researcher will conclude by offering the implications that these differences may have for evangelism to LDS members. In Chapter 4, this approach will be compared with several other popular witnessing approaches aimed at reaching LDS members and the effectiveness of evangelism based on this new approach will be demonstrated through field-testing of this new strategy. A training seminar will also be developed and geared at increasing the likelihood that Christians will evangelize LDS members.

The methodology for sharing the gospel with LDS members will center on a short presentation that centers around a visual aid (see Appendix 4). It is believed that the visual aid will cut through the vocabulary barrier and allow the distinctions to be seen clearly. The effectiveness of this methodology will be

tested by asking LDS members to answer a few preliminary questions that will indicate their understanding of the distinctions between LDS and Christian theology. The researcher will then employ his methodology and ask several follow up questions that will gauge if any progress has been made in the LDS members' understanding of the differences between LDS and traditional Christian views of justifying grace.

This project, if it is successful, will clearly identify features of LDS soteriology that are distinct from traditional Christian soteriology. Due to a similar theological vocabulary, these distinctions are often overlooked, or misunderstood, by Christians and LDS members alike. This project will develop a methodology for presenting the gospel so that LDS members are able to clearly understand key doctrinal differences as they apply to salvation and will put tools in Christian's hands that will enable them to share the gospel effectively with LDS members. If this is successful, several major barriers to effective gospel communication will be removed and the door will be opened for Christian ministry to become more effective in evangelization of LDS members.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

It has been over 500 years since the doctrine of justification has been such a central source of theological debate as it does today. The researcher does not pretend to have the intellectual and scriptural acumen to settle all the important issues and relevant discussions that surround the doctrine of justification. Instead of summarizing all the various views and interpretations of key biblical passages and terms, the researcher will argue from his own viewpoint, making comments regarding dissenting views when necessary. His own conviction is that, by-in-large, the view of justification that emerges from the Protestant Reformers does the most justice to the biblical data.

In what follows in section A, five key Biblical texts will be examined that center on justification (Romans 3:23-24, Romans 4:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9, and Galatians 2:16).[1] These texts, when taken together, show that faith in Christ's work on the cross is necessary and sufficient for eternal life. In this section we will see the clear link between grace and justification. In the

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, Bible refrences are from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (ESV), copyright 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

next section, four verses will be highlighted that show the need for and task of evangelism (Matthew 28:19ff, Romans 10:13-15, Mark 4:3-8, Ecclesiastes 11:5-6). Then, in the conclusion (section C), the streams of thought relating to justification will be pulled together into a synthetic whole and how that view relates to evangelism will be demonstrated. At various places in the discussion of these key texts, the researcher will interact with aspects of the new perspectives on Pauline theology. It is hoped this will help to clear up what the researcher takes the texts to be saying, as well as prove to be a reference point for several aspects of LDS Neo-Orthodox theology that will be discussed later in the project.

Key Texts in Establishing a Traditional Christian View of Justifying Grace

The first text to be considered is Romans 3:21-25.

> *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe*. *For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith*.

Romans 3:21 and following has been called the center of the whole Bible.[2] This verse declares that through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteousness of God (δικαιοσυνη θεου) is made manifest; it is about how a person can be considered

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[2] D.A. Carson, *Scandalous: The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 39.

just before a holy God. Though all are guilty before God because all have sinned, we are justified (δικαιόω) by grace through the redemption that is in Christ. There has been lots of discussion about what the δικαιοσυνη θεου is. Is it a status God gives, is it God's covenantal faithfulness, or is it God's justice that is borne out in wrath against his enemies? Though the term is never used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX), we do find δικαιοσυνη (righteousness) modified by a personal pronoun whose antecedent is "God" or "the Lord" 48 times in the LXX.[3] Douglas Moo comments that, in the vast majority of cases, the righteousness of God in the Old Testament is his saving intervention on behalf of his people. This saving activity is spoken of from the standpoint of either God or the recipient of God's righteousness (his saving activity). In those cases in which one sees God's righteousness from the standpoint of the recipient, it is a gift or status bestowed.[4] What is so important about what Paul is saying here in Romans 3 is that God's saving activity is working apart from the law. God justifies the guilty by grace. Grace means undeserved favor. This is the heart of the gospel; God justifies those who do not deserve it. The term, "justify," is a forensic term, meaning essentially, "declare righteous." Sinners deserve a guilty verdict from the judge (God), but instead, by

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[3] Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 81.

[4] Ibid., 82. See Psalm 35:27-28; Isa. 46:13, 50:5-8.

God's grace, are acquitted of their guilt. Justification does not change one's sinful behavior, but it changes the way God relates to the sinner.

In verse twenty-two, we learn that God, by his grace, declares all those righteous who, by faith, are redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus. The "righteousness of God" described in vs. 21 (the righteousness that is apart from the law), is given on condition of faith in Jesus. In the English Standard Version (ESV) translation of vs. 22, the verb "faith" and noun "believe" sound, in English, like they come from different roots. However, in Greek, they share the same root (πιστ). D.A. Carson highlights this fact by translating the verse, "This righteousness from God comes through *trust* in Jesus Christ to all who *trust*."[5] Because all have fallen short of God's glory due to deliberate acts of rebellion (sin), all need to rely on God to be justified. This justifying work of God is available to all (without ethnic, social, or gender bias) on the condition of faith.

D.A. Carson zeros in on the "propitiation" language of vs. 25, noting,

> God the Father sets forth Jesus as the propitiation to make himself propitious; God is both the subject and the object of propitiation. God is the one who provides the sacrifice precisely as a way of turning aide his

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[5] Carson, 54-55. Carson argues against reading this as a subjective genitive (faithfulness of Jesus), as N.T. Wright encourages us to read it (See N.T. Wright, *Justification* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), 105. Carson sees many passages in the New Testament that affirm Jesus' faithfulness/obedience, but also believes that in Romans 3-4, "Paul repeatedly returns to the notion of 'faith,' and in every single case he is referring to *our faith*, not to *Jesus' faithfulness.*"

> own wrath. God the Father is thus the propitiat*or* and the propitiat*ed*, and God the son is the propitiat*ion*.[6]

It is not as though God, seeing our depravity, sends some innocent third party to become the fall guy for our sin. This would be incredibly unjust and, because the Bible maintains God sends his son to take the blame and bear the penalty for our sins, were it not for the doctrine of the trinity, it would also be a sore case of child abuse. However, because the bible maintains that Jesus is God the Son, through the incarnation, God does not punish an innocent 3rd party—he does not send a fall guy—he becomes the fall guy. God bears our sins and takes the blame for our unrighteousness.

That all sinners can, by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, be declared righteous by God is the basic theological framework from which Paul expresses his theology, and thus "justification by faith" is the driving force in Paul's thought.[7] It is important to note that Paul says this justification happens "now." Justification happens in the present, that is, it is concurrent with belief. Whether the verdict has already been heard or if Paul anticipates the verdict based on faith is unclear. Either way, God's saving action, which is tied historically to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary, assures those who trust in Jesus that they are recipients of eternal life; it is a done deal.

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[6] Ibid., 64-65.

[7] Moo, 90.

This eternal life is described in the Old Testament most clearly in Isaiah 25. In this section of Isaiah, God unfolds his plan for the future restoration of Israel as the center of God's rule on the earth. In Isaiah 25:6-9, God describes this coming day this way:

> On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoke. It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Among the notable features of this "messianic banquet," we see the Lord of hosts throw a feast for his people consisting of the finest of foods and drink; he swallows up death and is an ever-present comfort to his people. Isaiah 49:6 and 55:1-6 remind us that God is not speaking only to physical Israel, but to all who will turn to him. This messianic hope is spoken of in similar language in the New Testament book of Revelation.

In Revelation 21:3-4, John prophesied,

> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

John was given a glimpse of the fulfillment of Isaiah's messianic banquet. Again one sees an emphasis on God's presence with His people and the everlasting

nature of this state. Eternal life, for the Christian, refers to living eternally in this blissful presence of the triune God. The opposite of this, living eternally away from the Lord's presence, is what traditional Christians describe as Hell. Jesus assures his followers that those who trust him will have eternal life.[8] In Christianity, there is no distinction between mere salvation and the fullness of salvation. To be saved means to exist eternally in God's unmediated presence, which is the fullness of salvation, or eternal life.

This is certainly good news; sinners who deserve God's wrath can have eternal life by placing faith in Jesus and his giving of himself as our sacrifice. This text expresses that salvation is by grace through faith, due to God's initiative.

Some theologians see Romans 3:21-25 as describing the faithful role of Jesus as the one who actually lived God's law (as Israel was supposed to), and thus could "live up to [Israel's] calling as the light to the dark world."[9] This interpretation, likely due to a need to fit this passage into a larger "New Perspectives" metanarrative, springs from reading "πίστεως Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ" in Romans 3:22 as a subjective genitive (faith/faithfulness of Jesus) rather than an objective genitive (faith in Jesus). However, what Paul teaches us in this

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[8] John 3:16

[9] Wright, 203.

passage is that Jesus is a propitiatory sacrifice (ιλαστήριον) and faith in that special sacrifice is what sinners need to inherit eternal life. Israel, even if she had obeyed the law to a much better degree, could not function in the same way. Paul is not saying, “Finally someone has come who can fulfill Israel’s calling.” What Paul is saying is, “Finally, someone has come whose death justifies those who believe.” What this text does not explicitly state is how faith in Jesus’ death connects to the all who believe. That question will become clear as one continues to read the key passages yet to come.

The second key text to consider is Romans 4:2-5.

> *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness*.

Romans 4:1-8 draws out the implications of the doctrine of justification by faith alone established in Romans 3, and “in the clearest terms imaginable, juxtaposes (a) righteousness as a gift (κατά χάριν) by believing, and (b) wages earned by working.”[10] Paul sees the two options to be either one’s works play a part in their righteous standing before God, thus giving them reason to boast, or

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[10] Moisés Silva, “Faith Versus Works in the Law of Galatians,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, P.T. O’Brian, M.A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 245-46.

one's works do not play a role in their righteous status, in which they are saved only by grace, and therefore have nothing about which to boast.

This important text draws from Genesis 15 as its backdrop. In the narrative of Genesis 15, God promises Abraham (Abram at that time) that he would have a direct heir. Abraham put his trust in God's promise, and Genesis 15 says that God reckoned (LXX, λογίζομαι) his trust in God to him as righteousness. Paul's main point in this text is that "the 'reckoning' of Abraham's faith for righteousness is an entirely gracious act that by its nature excludes any appeal to works."[11] Abraham's faith had a definite content, as one sees in 4:5; he trusted in the one who justifies the ungodly.[12] Paul emphasizes that Abraham was not reckoned as righteous because of exemplarary behavior on his part. If his righteous standing before God was due to his piety, works he had done, or tests he had passed, then he would have something about which to boast. But that is Paul's point, namely, Abraham had nothing to boast about—in the same way no one has any room for boasting—because he, like us, is saved by grace alone through faith.[13] Abraham's relationship with God is established as an act of pure grace activated by Abraham's faith in God's promise. Paul thus sees

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[11] Moo, 255.

[12] Mark A. Seifrid, "Romans," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament,* ed. G.K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 623.

[13] Ephesians 2:8-9

Abraham as the case study of all case studies to dismantle any works-righteousness related scheme for salvation. Abraham is righteous, but not because he has acted with righteusness. Rather, God treats as righteous those who are ‘’ungodly,’’ who have placed their faith and trust in Him.[14]

There are some contemporary theologians who read Paul not as countering legalisitc Jewish individuals who thought they could earn salvation through their works, but rather, as if he was battling a tendency among some Jewish Christians who "were alienating themselves from their fellow believers in a spirit of ethnic exclusivism and pride."[15] On this view, Paul is thought to be arguing that there are no identity markers (such as dietary laws, Sabbath observance) that mark out God’s covenantal community. Though the New

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[14] Douglas Moo warns of mistaken interpretations that arise when one views Gen. 15 through the lenses of Gen. 22, as some Jewish interpreters have done. See James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998)*, 296-99.* The simple fact that Paul points out that God justifies the ungodly shows us that Abraham’s blessing was not a result of his own righteousness. This lesson was lost on my Institute of Religion instructor (Rel. 301, Old Testament I), who, when teaching on Abraham, told us that he was blessed because he passed the test of Gen. 22. In fact, the Student Manual for the course says, “If Abraham had failed his test, he would have lost his position.” That would mean that if he had failed the test, God would be justified in breaking an unconditional covenant that only He ratified. That does not sound like justice, nor does it sound like an unconditional covenant. When I asked my instructor if he thought it was instructive that the promises of Genesis 15 came prior to the “testing” in Genesis 22, he thought a moment, said “yes, interesting,” and moved on.

[15] Robert Saucy and Alan W. Gomes, “Justification and the New Perspective,” *Sundulos* (Spring 2011).

Perspectives on Paul movment is quite varied and multi-faceted, the above sketch provides the basic context from which many New Perspective Scholars derive a distinctive New Perspective understanding of justification.

Justification, in the mind of some prominent New Perspective thinkers, is not about "getting in," as much as it is about pronouncing who is or is not a member of God's covenantal community. It is not how we are saved as much as it is a declaration that a person is part of God's covenantal people. This idea is often associated with a two-tiered justification. This view of justification maintains that while one is initially justified by faith (it is the only badge indicating that we are part of God's covenantal people), one's future/final justification will be on the basis of his/her works (though these are produced by the power of God's Spirit, and, as such, cannot really be considered "ours").[16]

The researcher sides with the many scholars who see Paul arguing against any method of "joining law-keeping—by which no flesh will be justified (Gal. 2:16)—with the work of Christ in order to be right with God."[17] Any attempt to add our works as the basis for our justification (initial or final) denies that salvation is by grace through faith, and instead gives one grounds to boast with

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[16] Ibid., Paul Rainbow sees good works, though being a sub-condition for our ultimate justification, as instrumental in meeting the outstanding condition for being justified finally. See Paul Rainbow, *The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005), 206. See also Wright, 108.

[17] Saucy and Gomes, *passim*.

regard to their salvation. But this is exactly what Paul argues against in Romans 4:2-5. Paul's use of Abraham is the support for his argument that "justification is not by a mix of faith and works, but by faith apart from works."[18]

Our third key text to consider is 2 Corinthians 5:21.

> *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*.

This verse essentially proclaims the fulfillment of God's promise in Isaiah 53:11, wherein God announced that through the messiah's suffering (bearing our iniquities), many will be made to be accounted righteous.[19] As 2 Corinthians 5:21 spells out, Jesus was made to be sin for our sake. It is likely that Paul is labeling Jesus as the vicarious sacrifice for sin, drawing from Old Testament texts like Leviticus 4:3 and 5:6, where "αμαρτία" refers to "sin offering."[20]

This verse also informs us that just as Jesus, who had no sin of his own, became sin, so we, who have no inherent righteousness, become righteous. Our sin is reckoned to Jesus, and his righteousness is reckoned to us. This verse tells one something of the inner workings of grace. One sees that, on the cross, Jesus was our substitute, dying the death we should have died, having lived the

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[18] Brian Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 89.

[19] J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 382.

[20] Vickers, 161.

life we should have lived. By placing our faith in his sacrificial death, our sins are reckoned to him (and so our sins are forgiven), and his righteousness is reckoned to us. Thus, one sees clearly that, just as in Romans 4, there is no room for boasting before God with regard to our salvation/justification. Faith in the work of Jesus is *necessary* and *sufficient* for eternal life. It is necessary because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23a), and it is sufficient because we are justified freely by his grace as a gift (Romans 3:23b).

There are some who disagree with this interpretation and instead read "δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ" as a subjective genitive referring to God's faithfulness to his covenant. N.T. Wright's novel interpretation of this verse has Paul describing his own work and ministry as the embodiment of God's covenantal faithfulness.[21] However, as has been argued, "there is no compelling reason, after all, to understand 5:21 as referring exclusively to Paul, a minister of the new covenant, as 'an incarnation of the covenant faithfulness of God."[22] Instead, in 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul is offering a "powerful summary of the ultimate historical-redemptive event that lies at the heart of his ministry of reconciliation."[23]

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[21] Wright, 163.

[22] Vickers, 180.

[23] Ibid.

2 Corinthians 5:21 expresses how grace through faith operates; and it operates in two ways: 1) Our sin is reckoned to Jesus, and 2) His righteousness is reckoned to us. This glorious exchange, though highlighted in the Reformation, finds a wealth of expression in the early church fathers as well.[24] Christians today are made righteous in the same way that Abraham was made righteous (as seen above), namely, through faith. Righteousness in the Old Testament essentially meant "doing what God requires,"[25] and as such, pushes us beyond seeing "righteousness" as synonymous with "covenantal membership," as some from within the new perspective camp would espouse.[26] Being made righteous by faith in Christ means more than being "in-covenant" with God, it also means being reckoned as if we have done everything the Lord requires of us. Thus, here one again sees the full sufficiency for salvation for those who believe. The doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness is a

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[24] See Nick Needham, "Justification in the Early Church Fathers," in *Justification in Perspective,* ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006). Needham points to imputation in the writings of Justin Martyr, Ambrosiaster, Chrysostrom, Tertullian, and others.

[25] Simon Gathercole, "The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond," in *Justification in Perspective*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Baker Academic, 2006), 237. Gathercole points to Deuteronomy 6:24-25 as a key text in understanding Old Testament righteousness.

[26] N.T. Wright, "New Perspectives on Paul," in *Justification in Perspective,* ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), *253.*

necessary synthesis of Paul's teaching in that it shows how Christ's sacrifice is both necessary and sufficient for our salvation.[27]

The researcher is sensitive to the fact that some who hear that faith in Jesus is necessary and sufficient may wonder why any Christian would then bother to obey God's commands. However, as Romans 6 spells out, the believer does not obey because he/she must, but because he/she can.[28] In Romans 12:1, Paul demonstrates the relationship between obedience and salvation, saying, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." Paul grounds the drive for personal holiness in God's mercy. One offers his/her life to God as worship because of the glory and great worth one sees in God in light of his sacrifice for him/her on the cross. Paul does not command the church in Rome to obey in order that they may be judged righteous, but rather he calls them to obey because they have been judged righteous. In other words, the Christian works *from* salvation, not *for* it. That final righteousness comes not from our own doing but from God is the theme of the next verse that will be considered.

The fourth text to consider as we explore justifying grace in traditional Christianity is Philippians 3:9.

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[27] Vickers, 18.

[28] Ibid., 230.

> *…and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*.

This verse powerfully sums up many of the themes already presented. One's own righteousness will never measure up to God's Holy standard, and so one needs imputed/alien righteousness. This righteousness is said to come through faith, not through any work of one's own. This is why Martin Luther suggests, "Wherefore it ought to be the first concern of every Christian to lay aside all confidence in works and increasingly to strengthen faith alone and through faith to grow in the knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus."[29] The believer focuses on Christ, and not his/her works, because it is in Jesus Christ that one is made righteous. As one puts faith in Jesus' work on the cross, they are saved/justified (Romans 10:9, John 3:16, etc.). What Philippians 3:9 makes clear is that the righteousness one receives is "instilled from without,"[30] and its basis is faith (and explicitly not works of the law). What this means, essentially, is that the believer in Christ has a true moral uprightness and conformity to God's holy standard, not because he or she has upheld all of God's moral norms, but

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[29] Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," *Three Treatises* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2nd revised ed., 1970), 281.

[30] Martin Luther, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 155.

because Jesus did. On the cross, the believer's sins became his and Jesus' righteousness became the believer's.[31]

Believing in the one whom God has sent is the work God requires of humankind if they will be rightly related to him (John 6:29). When we have believed, we are justified, which both saves us from our past sins and secures us for the future Kingdom. There is no work to add to this saving, and it is there, in all its fullness, for those who believe. Salvation is thus by grace, not by one's works.

The fifth text this researcher will consider is Galatians 2:16.

> …*yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified*.

Galatians 2:16 is the central proposition of the book of Galatians. Paul's point is that we have believed (aorist tense), and thus have been made righteous (subjunctive aorist passive of δικαιόω). Richard Longenecker points out that the verb, "δικαιόω," is used forensically.[32] This means that when we have placed our faith in Christ's work on the cross, we are, from that moment forward, justified

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[31] Saucy and Gomes, *passim*.

[32] Richard Longenecker, *Galatians*, 85. See also Mark A. Seifrid, "Paul's Use of Righteousness Language Against Its Hellenistic Background," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifried (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 52.

(made righteous in God's sight). One's belief is a "once-for-all response that results in a transfer of status."[33] This understanding, while a focal point of Reformation theology, finds roots in the writings of Augustine. He often speaks of salvation as a divine gift of grace whereby the sinner is pardoned.[34] Augustine, as in the New Testament (and in Luther and Calvin), often stressses that saving faith will inevitably produce fruit (good works).[35] Those works, to be clear, do not save us, for we are saved by faith alone. As the example of the thief on the cross teaches us—who died with not one good work/ordinance to his name—one's future in paridise is not tied up in one's actual righteousness, but in God's declarative act of justification when one places faith in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for all sins. Only a few verses later (Galatians 2:21), Paul declares that if the law could justifiy, then Christ died for nothing. Thus, it is obvious to Paul

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[33] Ibid.

[34] David F. Wright, "Justification in Augustine," in *Justification in Perspective*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 71.

[35] In fact, Calvin taught that the grace that saves is, at the same time, the grace that sanctifies, such that they cannot be severed. See Karla Wübbenhorst, "Calvin's Doctrine of Justification," in *Justification in Perspective*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 112.

that it is Christ's death that makes one righteous/justified, and there is no other way to be such.[36]

In fact, in Galatins 5, Paul goes so far as to say that if one does any work with the understanding that it will, in some way, commend one's self before God, then Christ is of no benefit to that person. The Galatian Christians were being tempted to accept circumsision (and a variety of other Jewish customs/rituals), and some were persuaded that unless they were circumcised, they would not be saved. Paul argues that if they are circumcised, they show that their hope is in their circumcision and not in Jesus. The same, of course, goes for any work one does in order to add to the work of Jesus for his/her righteousness. At the end of the day, we must decide if the righteousness that we have in Jesus is enough or do we need to augment it in some way. If one thinks we need to add to Jesus' work to be justified, then Paul's warning ought to be applied to him/her and he/she is ultimately rejecting Christ.[37]

Paul highlights that "it is by grace we are saved" by proclaiming that no one will be made righteous by works of the law. In other words, Paul condemns

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[36] Simon Gathercole argues that, for Paul, what it means to be made righteous is to have our relationship with God restored, which requires our sins to be forgiven. Thus, Jesus' death on the cross, forgiveness, and our justification are forever bound together in an act of Divine grace. See Simon Gathercole, "The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond," *Justification in Perspective*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic: 2006), 219-241.

[37] Galatians 5:1-12

the whole endeavor of winning God's favor by a merit-amassing observance of the law.[38] Christians are appoved by God (justified), not because of any covenant they have kept or set of obedient actions they have performed, but because of their faith in the covenant God keeps, the actions that God has performed for the Christian. God has been faithful to live up to the covenant He made to Abraham, his seed (Jesus) being the blessing to the nations. When a person trusts in the sacrifice of Christ, he/she is made righteous the same way Abraham was, namely by faith in the covenant-keeping God.

Some first-century Judaism scholars have found what has been termed, "covenantal nomism," to be the primary way a first-century Jew would have understood their relationship with God. While the pervasivness of this covenantal nomistic approach to God has been questioned, it is recognized as at

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[38] Gathercole, 241. E.P. Sanders, in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, points out that a large stream of sources indicate that first century Judaism did not view Torah observance as merit-amassing, but as a response to a loving God who had acted on their behalf. Works of the Law, for Sanders, are badges of identity marking out God's covenantal people. He calls this system "Covenantal Nomism." Henri Blocher has strongly criticized E.P. Sanders and his followers for restricting "works of the law" to *only* mean badges of Jewishness." See Henri Blocher, "Justification of the Ungodly," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifried (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 487.

least one way first-centruy Jews understood thier relationship with God.[39] Covenantal nomism has two key elements as it pertains to how one stands approved before God: first, one "gets into the covenant" as an act of grace (God's election), then one obeys the law to "stay in." For these scholars, "the works of the law" in Galatians 2:16 are often seen as badges of inclusion for the covenantal people of God. Paul is thus seen as saying that the correct badge is faith, and not an external action, ritual, or observance. According to these theologians, Paul is not arguing that our works do not give us our righteousness, for they do play a role in keeping us in the covenant. However, as Peter T. O'Brian points out, "for Paul, 'works of the law' has a broader significance than simply being boundary markers such as circumcision, Sabbath-keeping and food laws."[40] Rather, the "works of the law" refer to all deeds done out of obedience to the law of Moses. Paul argues persuasively that works of the law cannot save because: 1) Nobody fulfills all of them (Galatians 3:10, Deuteronomy 27:26); 2) God has pointed us to faith as the means by which we can be saved (e.g. Abraham in Genesis 15; Habakkuk 2:4); 3) Keeping the law is based on doing,

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[39] See *Justification and Variegated Nomism, vol. 1: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), passim. See also *Justification and Variegated Nomism: vol. 2: The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), vi.

[40] Peter T. O'Brian, "Was Paul a Covenantal Nomist?," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifried (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 279.

which is incompatable with resting in faith on God's promise.[41] Paul, in Galatians 2:16 (and the rest of Galatians), is, if anything, reacting *against* covenantal nomism. The works of the law play no part in one's justification; they do not make one righteous and they do not keep one in God's covenant.[42] It is God's free gift of grace, shown on the cross where Jesus bore our sins and we recieved his righteousness, that is the source of present and future pardon and acquittal.

Key Texts in Defining the Necessity and Task of Evangelism

The first text this researcher will demonstrate highlights the need and task of evangelism is consider is Matthew 28:18-20.

> *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*.

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[41] O'Brian, "Was Paul a Covenantal Nomist?," 280-281.

[42] Interestingly, BYU professor Stephen D. Ricks penned an examination of the Deuteronomic covenant, and the blessings and cursings associated with keeping and forsaking the covenant by our obedience of, or disobedience of, the covenantal conditions. Rather than show, as Paul does, our need for a redeemer, Ricks reads the Mosaic Covenant as a reminder of the importance of covenants today. He also seems to understand Jesus as the one who sets the terms of the new covenant, following the pattern of this Mosaic covenant. In making this connection, Ricks affirms that obedience or disobedience to Jesus' commands is the foundation for our inclusion in or exclusion from the blessings of the covenant. See Stephen D. Ricks, "Deuteronomy: A Covenant of Love," *Ensign* (April 1990).

In 1792, following on the heels of the Evangelical Awakening led by John Wesley in the UK, and Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield in the US, William Carey organized the founding of the first modern missionary society: The Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen.[43] That same year Carey published a book entitled, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. This book emphasized the Christian's obligation to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).[44] Carey, and those who founded and supported the modern missionary movements that began to spring up over the next half century, believed that it was God's will for Christians "to make disciples of all nations."[45] It would be hard to overstate how central this text has been, and remains to be, in shaping Christianity's zeal for missions. It is clear that Jesus did not expect his disciples to remain inwardly focused. Rather, Jesus demanded that those who follow him *go* into the world. Jesus set the example for living a life on mission, saying, "As my father has sent me, even so I send you."[46] After that command, no disciple could doubt what Jesus expects of him/her and, from that time on,

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[43] William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 7-8.

[44] Ibid., 6.

[45] Ibid.

[46] John 20:21

virtually all Christian service in the world has that command behind it.[47]

Jesus demands that his followers go, and their going is with a purpose. It is more than to bring humanitarian aid, to care for the environment, or to care for the poor, as good as all of these endeavors are. Disciples are to go and make more disciples. The Apostle Paul can be seen carrying out this vision in 2 Timothy 2:2, "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Paul, himself a disciple, had won Timothy to the faith, and was now training him to reproduce reproducers. The purpose of our "going" is to make disciples.

The last point to make from the Great Commission is that Jesus calls His disciples to the task of baptizing and teaching new disciples. In Acts, and throughout the New Testament, a baptized person is incorporated into a worshiping community with accountability and boundaries (cf. Acts 2:41-47).[48] This demonstrates that carrying out the Great Commission is a call to make disciples, but it also must include a call to create new outposts of Christian worship where new disciples can be baptized and taught to follow Jesus in obedience. Matthew 28:18-20 commissions Christ's followers to go and make

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[47] James Stewart, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Abingdon Press), 187.

[48] Timothy Keller and J. Allen Thompson, *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planting Center, 2002), 29.

disciples, but how are they to go about that task? Romans 10:13-15 provides insight into that question.

Romans 10:13-15 is the second text of the researcher would like to consider.

> *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!*

In Romans 10, one sees Paul crying out for the urgency of preaching Christ.[49] Verse thirteen is a quote from Joel 2:32 that the early church understood to refer to Jesus.[50] Paul stresses that every person who appeals to the Lord for salvation would be saved. Thus one sees the universal availability of salvation.[51] Salvation is a matter of calling on the name of the Lord. In verse fourteen and following, Paul answers the question, “How will anybody ever call upon the name of the lord?” In other words, what are the conditions in which a person will exercise saving faith in Christ, and thereby, call upon his name? In Romans 10:14-15, Paul embarks on a series of four rhetorical questions, each

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[49] K.P. Yohannan, *Revolution in World Mission* (Carrollton: GFA Books, 1986), 131. K.P. Yohannan is the founder and international director of Gospel for Asia.

[50] Peter quotes this verse in Acts 2:21, in his speech at Pentecost.

[51] Moo, 660.

beginning with the interrogative “how,” that answers the larger question of how a person exercises saving faith.[52] In so doing, Paul highlights the indispensability and necessity of evangelism.[53]

First, he asks, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?” Prior to calling on Jesus name, and thus being saved, one must believe; that is, one must put his/her faith in Jesus. So, how does one generate belief? Paul’s second question helps point the way forward. He asks, “How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?” So then, hearing is an essential step in coming to faith in Christ. Belief is necessary to calling on Jesus, but hearing the good news that one can find salvation by calling upon Him precedes belief in that message.

His third question continues the chain of reasoning, asking, “How are they to hear without someone preaching?” If one needs to hear the message, they also need someone to preach it. But the preacher is just a herald, a messenger, and thus Paul’s final question, “How are they to preach unless they are sent?”

Thus Paul’s basic understanding of the role of evangelism in sinners becoming saved is outlined in this passage. For all sinners must call on the name of the Lord, but calling upon His name presupposes they know and believe

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[52] Ibid., 663.

[53] John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 285.

him. Just as believing is logically prior to calling, so hearing is logically prior to believing.[54] But nobody will hear unless somebody tells him or her, and nobody will tell him or her unless they are sent to herald the news.

As seen in Matthew 28 (see also John 20:21), Jesus sends the disciples. Thus Jesus sends the disciples, the disciples go and preach, the lost hear, and if, having believed, they call out to God, they are saved.

Paul's quote from Isaiah 52:7 in verse fifteen offers scriptural support of the necessary role of preaching,[55] in which he states, "If those who proclaimed the good news of release from Babylonian exile were thus celebrated, how much more welcome the heralds of the gospel of Christ should be!"[56]

Of course, Romans 10:13-15 is aimed at explaining Israel's lack of belief. Paul is essentially arguing that all the necessary external components are present, which leaves the blame on Israel alone. Christ has sent preachers who have faithfully heralded the gospel and Israel has heard. All that is left is for Israel to trust in the message of Jesus' death and resurrection such that if they would simply "confess with [their] mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in [their]

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[54] Stott, *Romans*, 286.

[55] Moo, 664.

[56] Stott, 284.

heart that God raised him from the dead, [they] would be saved."[57] If they would but exercise belief in the message that had been preached they would be justified.[58] This is why Paul speaks of the gospel being the power of God unto salvation to those who believe. Hearing the gospel is the final necessary element required before faith is possible. In basketball, a person cannot score unless they have possession of the ball. Even if your team has the ball, you personally cannot score until you have touched the ball. If your team passes you the ball, it is then possible for you to score. Once you receive the ball you still have to shoot it into the basket, but you do not have that option until the ball is in your possession. So, with salvation, faith is not possible until the preacher is sent and preaches the gospel to the lost person. Once the person hears the message, the ball is in his or her court.

The third text that will help highlight the role and task of evangelism is Mark 4:3-8.

> *Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.*

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[57] Romans 10:9

[58] Romans 10:10

This passage does not require a lengthy discussion. Jesus himself shared the meaning of this parable with his disciples a few verses later. The seed is the word, and the word penetrates some hearts and minds but not others. This is a powerful reminder concerning the task of evangelism: We do not always know the condition of the soil into which we sow the word.

Ecclesiastes 11:6, which shows more spiritual principles relating to sowing and reaping, is our fourth text that will highlight the role and task of evangelism.

> *As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything. In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.*

Drawing from the truth of Mark 4 that we do not know the quality of the soil into which we sow the word, one can apply the principles from Ecclesiastes 11 to the task of evangelism. Ecclesiastes 11:6 argues that because one is never sure which endeavors will prove fruitful, the right approach is to give oneself to the responsibility at hand.[59] As this is applied to evangelism, three principles can be learned.[60]

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[59] Michael A. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983), 143.

[60] Gary Rhoromayer unpacked these principles in an Evangelism Training webinar entitled, “Sowing Seeds of Awareness throughout Your Target Area,” which the researcher participated in November 23, 2010.

First, in the same way one does not understand how God gives life to newborn babies, so one does not always understand how God is at work in the world. The farmer does not know which seeds God will enable to prosper, so he sows liberally. In evangelism, one does not know how God's spirit is at work in the lives of those to whom one preaches, and thus one simply sows and leaves the results to God. Just as the farmer understands the inherent mystery in his craft and so does not know which seed will prosper, so also, this mystery is inherent into spiritual sowing and reaping. One does not know which seeds will prosper, but one knows there will be no fruit if nothing is sown …so we sow!

Secondly, the farmer is said to sow in the morning and evening, that is, he is putting in a full day's labor.[61] Because the farmer does not know which seeds will take root, he sows liberally and constantly. In the same way, we do not know when we preach the Word if faith will result or not, but we know all the external steps (see prior discussion of Romans 10:13-15) have been fulfilled by our preaching. We cannot see the quality of the soil, so we sow liberally, hoping some may land on good soil and produce fruit.

Thirdly, the farmer knows it is hard work and so he does not withhold his hand (literally, let down his hand). Biblically, slack or feeble hands are a symbol

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[61] Eaton, 143.

of inactivity.[62] Here one sees the need to continue in the work of evangelism, no matter if the results are discouraging. Not every seed bears fruit; in fact, Jesus instructs that the road to salvation is a narrow road, and there are few who find it.[63] Yet, we should not withhold our hand and ought instead do the work of the evangelist.[64]

Synthesis and Summary

Grace is the fundamental contact point between humankind and our creator. The entire Bible points to one singular event in human history and beckons us to come and see what God has done for us. God is the great keeper of promises; He is faithful to His covenants, and He is quick to lavish His loving-kindness onto His children. The incarnation of the Son of God is the event the whole Bible calls us to consider, and the cross of Christ is the seminal event in the salvation of humankind.

Humans are sinful by nature (since the fall) and by choice. Sin separates us from the Holy God. It is at the cross that Jesus reconciled men and God. It was on the cross that Jesus, by His physical body through death, presents all

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[62] Eaton, 143.

[63] Mark 7:14

[64] 2 Timothy 4:5

those who trust in His sacrifice as holy and blameless before God (Colossians 1:22).[65] Jesus becomes the Passover lamb sacrificed so that we might enjoy fellowship with God. Jesus, the Divine Son of God, leaves His heavenly abode and bears the sin, guilt, cursedness, and forsakenness humans deserved so that we might enter God's heavenly home and dwell with Him for eternity.

The giving of His Son to die for humans so that we might become His children is the supreme act of God's love and a sublime act of grace. It is love because, in the atonement, God opts Himself to pay the penalty for the sin of those who, up to that point, had no interest in Him, rather than endure eternity without them. It is grace because His atoning sacrifice, and the gift of fellowship it brings, is freely given, not merited or deserved.

God's grace is demonstrated and prefigured throughout the Old Testament and explicitly described and depicted in the New Testament. The New Testament does not develop a new doctrine of grace, rather it points back to the Old Testament as the precedent for how humans may experience fellowship with God. Abraham is seen as the perfect test case, as it was with Abraham that

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[65] Colossians 1:22 teaches us that Christ's death presents those who believe in its efficacy to God where they stand before Him as guiltless, holy, without accusation. We are treated as such, not because we have not sinned, but because Christ bore the full penalty for our sin on the cross and gave us our righteousness, whereby we are declared holy. While our evil behavior brings alienation and enmity between God and men, Christ's sacrifice reconciles us, and makes us presentable before God. See Curtis Vaughn, "Colossians," in *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, vol. 11,, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 184-187.

God initiated His great covenant with humanity. In Genesis 12, God promises Abraham land, posterity, and that his lineage will be a blessing to all the nations. When it comes time to sign on the dotted line, and for Abraham to enter into the covenant with God, God seals the deal without Abraham having any part in the ratification process (Genesis 15). He simply believed that God would be faithful to his covenantal commitments.

The New Testament sees in Christ the literal fulfillment of that Abrahamic covenant. Through Christ (Abraham's Seed), the entire world is blessed with a right relationship with God by faith. It was by faith in the covenantal faithfulness of God that Abraham was made righteous, and it is by faith in that same covenant keeping God whose faithfulness was finally fulfilled in the atonement that Christians are made righteous today. Becoming a Christian, then, means trusting in God's provision for sin, Jesus Christ. It means renouncing and forsaking any and all other means of being justified. Christians enter into God's unconditional covenant by faith and as such are reckoned righteous now and forever.

Christians trust in Jesus' act of substitutionary atonement for their sake, whereby sinners (the ungodly) are justified and made righteous before God, not on their own merits, but on the merit and imputed righteousness of Jesus. At the moment the believer turns to Him and places his/her trust in Jesus as his/her

savior,[66] he/she is forgiven and Christ's righteousness is imparted to him/her. Thus, God is both just (exacting the right penalty for sin) and merciful (forgiving sins). God, in His perfect justice, cannot forgive sins willy-nilly; He bears the burden Himself. The cross is the symbol of the grace, love, mercy, and justice of God. The grace of God is necessary, for there is no other way to be justified (see discussion of Galatians 2:16 and Philippians 3:9 above), and the grace of God is sufficient for eternal life for all who believe (see discussion of Romans 3:21-25 and 4:2-5 above). Because faith in Christ is both necessary and sufficient, when one places their faith in Christ they can have full assurance that they will inherit eternal life.[67] All of this is said to happen while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8), while we were dead in our transgressions (Ephesians 2:5). To be dead in our transgressions means we have nothing by which to commend ourselves before God. Jesus does not meet us halfway; he does not polish us up a bit and

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[66] Turning to God implies turning away from whatever we had been trying to gain meaning from beforehand (i.e. repentance). Timothy Keller reminds us that our sins show us the idols that hold the functional trust of our hearts. An idol, Keller reminds us, is "anything that is more important that God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything that you seek to give you what only God can give." Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit God's: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power and the Only Hope that Matters* (New York, Dutton, 2009), xvii. Turning to God is the same thing as repentance, where we leave behind the way of acting that is contrary to God's will and choose to find meaning and significance in God rather than the things of the world. Further, when one repents and turns to God, he/she will never again be at peace with their sin.

[67] 1 John 5:11-13, John 3:16

send us on our way. Jesus bears all of our sins and is our whole and complete righteousness. This is why Paul is adamant in Ephesians 2:8-9 that our salvation is by grace alone, apart from any works, so that none can boast. Our salvation by grace is a gift we receive, not a work to be wrought.[68] That is, justifying grace is a gift and is not earned.[69]

When an individual believes in the sacrificial sacrifice of Christ for salvation, God regenerates the believer and sends the Holy Spirit to indwell him/her. When He has taken up residence in the believer, the work of sanctification begins as the new believer grows in knowledge and likeness of Christ. To be clear, God's salvation does not come in response to a life of righteousness. Any/all righteousness comes in response to salvation,[70] offered to us as a free gift.[71] Water baptism is a symbol of this dual nature of the work of

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[68] In Ephesians 2:8-9, the phrase, "τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον" (And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God- ESV), has led to divergent opinions among commentators because "It" is neuter, while "grace" and "faith" are feminine, and the phrase, "you have been saved," is masculine. The pronoun does not seem to agree with anything, which has led many commentators to conclude Paul means the whole process is a gift. See A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," vol. 11 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 36-37.

[69] Of course, as Ephesians 2:10 (and James 2:14-26) is quick to point out, a saving faith will bear fruit. The Christian works from salvation, not for it; and from grace, not for it.

[70] In view of God's mercy… (Romans 12:1).

[71] Keller, 63.

Christ in the new believer's life, that is, the taking away of sin and being raised in the newness of life with the Spirit. Though baptism does not bring eternal life, it is a powerful symbol of the salvation Christ gives which all believers are called to enjoin.

Christians believe that faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus is sufficient for salvation. While real faith will produce good fruit, that fruit does nothing to help one gain eternal life. Good works are the fruit of justification, the evidence that God's Spirit is in fact at work in the saved person's heart. In fact, taking the example of the thief on the cross, Christians believe that one could conceivably dwell with God in Heaven for eternity without one good work to their name (death-bed repentance, while not recommended, is possible). Truly that type of person is to be pitied for the life lived without the joy of the Lord, but how felicitous for that individual to know that the merit of Jesus is enough.

Luke 15 tells the story of two wayward sons (though the story is commonly known as "The Prodigal Son"). This story, a parable told by Jesus, highlights several important features of salvation already discussed. Each son does something that separates himself from the father's lavish banquet, and the father goes out to each one to bring him in. The elder brother feels he deserves the blessing the father is giving to his prodigal son and represents all those who believe that through their obedience they will earn God's favor. The elder brother demonstrates he never really loved the father, but obeyed him to get what he really wanted from him.

The younger brother was more explicit in his rebellion, taking his share of the inheritance and running away. Both sons were ultimately "using the father for their own self-centered ends rather than loving, enjoying, and serving him for his own sake."[72] The younger brother's enslavement to worldly things kept him from the Father's table, while it was the elder brother's pride in his good deeds, rather than remorse over his bad deeds, that kept him from the Father's feast.[73] The father in the story runs out to meet his prodigal son, and he goes out to the elder brother who obstinately will not enter the feast. Likewise, Jesus leaves his heavenly glory and community within the trinity to be alienated and forsaken by the Father in order to bring us into fellowship with God; he leaves heaven so we can gain that fellowship. Because there is no other way to the Lord's table, Jesus' death is necessary and all who trust in his provision for sin are accepted at the table, and thus He is sufficient.

The lost today (LDS or otherwise) are in the same predicament as they were in Paul's day. They will not enter into a saving relationship with Jesus until they hear the true gospel, and they will not hear the true gospel unless it is preached to them. For this reason, this project essentially has two goals. One is that the methodology that has been developed will remove barriers to effective

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[72] Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (New York: Dutton, 2008), 36.

[73] Ibid., 77.

communication so that when preachers preach the gospel to LDS members they hear it. If, when an LDS member is told, “Jesus saves you,” they hear, “through the atonement of Jesus all humanity is universally saved from physical death,” then the gospel has not been effectively shared with them. The goal, then, on the one hand is to cut through the vocabulary barriers so that effective and clear evangelism can take place. The second goal, a corollary to the first, is that Christians, because they are trained to communicate the gospel effectively in the LDS context, would feel an increased desire and motivation to preach the gospel to LDS members.

Christians evangelize liberally because they do not know who will accept the gospel and who will not. We know God’s power is at work as the gospel is preached, and we pray His spirit will empower our message, that it will take root, and produce fruit.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Clearing the Way

Before one can move forward with comparing LDS grace to the Christian conception of justification offered above, “clearing of the way” must be done so that several pitfalls are avoided. One difficulty in understanding LDS saving grace is that the word “saving” often carries with it different connotations than in traditional Christian definitions. In fact, the primary understanding of the word, “saved,” in LDS theology is the resurrection from the dead (i.e. saved from physical death). When Paul uses the term “saved” in Ephesians 2:8, he uses the perfect tense, meaning that Paul wants to draw attention to the condition one now enjoys as a result of a past-completed action. That is, we are saved today because of a past-completed action (the gift of grace operative through the atonement of Jesus). For Paul, while being a recipient of God’s saving grace may include being a future beneficiary of the resurrection, the resurrection certainly does not exhaust its meaning. Thus, if one wants to compare LDS grace with traditional Christian grace, one must find a closer corollary.

LDS doctrine uses the term “eternal life” to mean something closer to what a Christian would call “salvation.” In LDS terminology, “eternal life” is a technical term meaning “to know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and dwell with Them forever- to inherit a place in the highest degree of the celestial Kingdom.”[1] The LDS church manual, *Gospel Principles*, equates “eternal life” with “exaltation.” It says, “Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He possesses all knowledge and wisdom. He is the Father of spirit Children. He is creator. We can become like our heavenly Father. This is exaltation.”[2] In LDS theology, “salvation,” in the sense of being resurrected, is a great gift and is not something gained only by the LDS. On this view, every human will be resurrected, and virtually all will eventually inherit one of three degrees of glory, with the Celestial kingdom being the highest kingdom. Eternal life, in this model of the afterlife, means reaching that Celestial kingdom where the LDS member will dwell in the presence of his/her Heavenly Father and

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[1] *True to the Faith*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 156. This is also sometimes called “the fullness of salvation.”

[2] *Gospel Principles*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009), 275. In the 1979 edition of *Gospel Principles*, exaltation is described in a similar, yet perhaps clearer way. It reads, “Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life that God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect, He possesses all knowledge and all wisdom. He is the father of spirit children. He is a creator. We can become Gods like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation.” Note the shift from describing exaltation as “becoming Gods like our Heavenly Father,” to the modern (2009) formulation, “we can become like our Heavenly Father.” Despite the introduction of vague language, it is clear that, in LDS theology, eternal life is more than living with God, and also includes breaking down the ontological barriers between God and the exalted human.

be like him. Thus, in the LDS model, all who have eternal life are "saved," but not everybody who is "saved" has eternal life.

In contrast, traditional Christians generally use "salvation" and "eternal life" interchangeably. While traditional Christians and LDS members' views of eternal life are not entirely consistent, there is enough in common for the purposes of this paper.[3] What we want to discover is the degree of similarity or difference the LDS and traditional Christians have with regard to how one is able to get the best the religion has to offer. How is it that one is able to be with the Heavenly Father for eternity? Both religions claim that it is by grace that we receive that great gift, and so, having already looked briefly at a Christian conception of the

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[3] There are significant differences within Mormonism and Christianity regarding what eternal life consists of. Both see eternal life as the highest good, and that good includes dwelling with our Heavenly Father for eternity. That is where the similarities end. LDS eternal life carries with it notions of Deification absent from Orthodox Christian belief. While some Christians use the term Deification (especially church fathers) to refer to our sanctified state, where we are seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father, traditional Christians do not believe that we one day become as God is in the full/essential sense. LDS theology proposes that humans are of the same species as the Father and that those who attain eternal life receive the greatest blessings imaginable. Exalted persons will become gods, will be able to have spirit children who will have the same relationship to them as we have to our Heavenly Father, and will have everything that our Heavenly Father has. For an enumeration of these blessings, see *Gospel Principles* (1981), 290. As Apostle Stephen L. Richards said, through progressing, we can become "as intelligent and omnipotent as God." (See Stephen L. Richards, *About Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1944), 10. After Richards' death in 1959, this clear description of exaltation in his pamphlet was replaced in the 1959 reprint by the more vague, "obtain the perfection which the Lord has promised to the truly faithful."

justifying/saving grace of God, our attention will now be turned to an examination of LDS grace and its relation to receiving eternal life.

One peculiar feature of LDS theology is that the "heavens are open." This means that LDS members believe God continues to speak to his people through a modern day prophet/seer/revelator. This creates a challenge for the historical theologian, the doctrine of justification, and the role of grace has morphed as new revelations have come.[4] For this reason, the development of justifying grace will

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[4] For an introduction to LDS historical theology, see Thomas Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," in *Sunstone* 5, no. 4 (1980). The difficulty in doing LDS historical theology is that, unlike Christian historical theology where one investigates how various texts and doctrines are interpreted and applied, in LDS historical theology one actually traces how new doctrines and scriptures arise and old doctrines are cast away. An interesting case study is the metamorphosis of LDS doctrine on the nature of God. In 1830, Joseph Smith taught that God is an absolute personage of spirit who revealed himself to humanity, clothed in flesh, in Jesus Christ (Mosiah 13-14). In Article 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants (a revelation received in April of 1830), Smith records that "there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them." Further, Smith's *Lectures on Faith* (which were published as the Doctrine section in the church's Doctrine and Covenants from 1835-1920) taught that the Father was the only Supreme Being, and possessed the basic attributes traditional Christianity would ascribe to God. Added to this quasi-traditional view of God is Smith's 1832 account of his First Vision, where he mentions only one personage and does not make the explicit separation of God and Jesus found in the later (1838) version of the Vision. Smith's writings also talked of Mary as the mother of God (which was changed in 1837 to "mother of the Son of God"; See 1 Nephi 11:18). Perhaps most striking of all the early statements concerning the nature of God is found in Mosiah 15:1-4, "God himself shall come down among the children of men and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of

be traced through several periods in LDS history. Following that sketch, the institutional view of justifying grace (the doctrine as the LDS Church teaches it today) will be summarized and compared with new developments in LDS theology (the LDS Neo-Orthodox theologians) and historic Christianity.

LDS Grace

LDS Grace in 1830 (Harmony/Palmyra period): Retaining a Remission of Sins

When the Book of Mormon was published in 1830, it contained a version of perfectionism possibly rooted in Smith's own affinities toward early nineteenth-century Methodism. Smith bemoaned the spiritual climate of his day. He was disgusted that none of the denominations he was acquainted with "adorn their profession by a holy walk and Godly conversation agreeable to what" he found contained in the Bible.[5]

God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and the Son—And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and earth." Later, as Smith added new scripture (The Book of Abraham- parts were complete in 1835, but the whole was not completed until 1942) and revelation (D&C 121- 1839; The King Follett discourse- April 1844), doctrinal statements concerning the nature of God began to stress the plurality of gods and the tangibility of his body, rather than the unity between the Father and Son and the Father's spiritual body.

[5] Joseph Smith Jr., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1992), 5.

Similarly to Methodists,[6] the Book of Mormon saw humans as capable of sanctification; however, in contrast to the perfectionism of the Methodists, Smith's doctrine stressed perfectionism as the pre-requisite of true saving grace rather than a result of the justifying grace of God.[7]

For Wesley and the Methodists, sanctification logically follows justification. While Wesley was optimistic of humankind moving from imputed righteousness to imparted righteousness, he was pessimistic of anyone doing so without God's Holy Spirit at work in the believer's life. In contrast, Smith had an even more optimistic view of human nature. While he felt free to talk about a condition of

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[6] Nathan Hatch, "Mormon and Methodist," *Journal of Mormon History* (Spring 1994). This article outlines the parallel origins of the Methodist and Mormon movements. Hatch sees that "both empowered ordinary people by taking their deepest spiritual impulses at face value, by shattering formal distinctions between lay and clergy, by releasing the entrepreneurial instincts of religious upstarts, and by incarnating the gospel message in the vernacular—in preaching, print and song.(25)" Hatch also sees striking parallels, which may bemoan the deep influence of the Methodist movement upon Joseph Smith, in both groups' consuming passion to convert the unconverted, their common yearning for the miraculous power of the biblical world, in how they relished the reality of the supernatural in everyday life, and in their relentless drive to broadcast their message.

[7] Ahlstrom, 326. Ahlstrom calls Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection his most original contribution to Protestant theology, and says that for every Methodist, life became a quest for complete sanctification or holiness (sinlessness). While justification was essential for salvation, the "second blessing of the Holy Spirit" could produce sanctification, the "fullness of faith." See also Ahlstrom, 477.

sinfulness inhered in humankind from the fall,[8] he also trusted that it was within a person's power to choose to become perfect like God. This was in part due to his understanding of the universal effects of the atonement. 2 Nephi 2:8-10 makes it clear that if it had not been for the atonement of Jesus, nobody could dwell in the presence of God. Further, that text claims that as a result of the atonement, all humans will be resurrected and they will stand in the presence of God and be judged. The merits, mercy, and grace of Jesus essentially earn each human their day in court. Without the grace of the atonement, justice would be robbed in that humans would not even be allowed to be judged by God and would instead remain in the grave due to the mortality brought about by the fall.

In one respect then, the atonement, in LDS theology, has a universal effect: the resurrection of all humanity into the presence of God so that He can judge each according to their merit. Due to this universal effect of the atonement, one Mormon theologian has summarized, "In a line of thought developing from Pelagius… The Book of Mormon agrees that in actuality no descendants of Adam are by nature inherently culpable as a result of the fall."[9] This "salvation" is a free gift of God, and is thus 100% grace. There is no human act that can

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[8] Mosiah 3:16-27, Alma 41-42.

[9] Blake T. Ostler, "The Development of the Mormon Concept of Grace," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 1 (1991): 64.

contribute to the reception of this gift, though it ought to be remembered that neither is there anything anyone can do to reject this grace.

The Book of Mormon lays out a view of perfection substantially different than the Methodists of Joseph's day. Rather than view sanctification as a grace received after justification, The Book of Mormon makes sanctification the basis for final justification (eternal life). In several passages, the Book of Mormon pushes its reader to conclude that if one is to gain eternal life, he/she must have stopped sinning. While many passages from the Book of Mormon could be pointed out as evidence of Joseph Smith's arch-legalistic leanings, the following four are good representatives of his views on sanctification and justification.

2 Nephi 25:23 is a key Book of Mormon text that connects grace and justification for LDS members.

> For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace we are saved, after all we can do.

Here one sees that it is by grace that anyone is saved, but that saving grace is not grasped until one has done all they can do. This verse has received much attention from both institutional LDS theologians and many Neo-Orthodox LDS theologians. Comments on Neo-Orthodox interpretations of this verse will be shared later, but how this verse has been interpreted by LDS authorities will now be examined. But first, lets to turn to Ether 2:15, another representative Book of

Mormon verses that show an early LDS view of the relationship between sanctification and the attainment of eternal life.

> And the Lord said unto him; I will forgive thee and thy brethren of their sins; but thou shalt not sin anymore, for ye shall remember that my Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore, if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

Ether promises forgiveness, but only for the one who stops his/her sinning.

> Next we turn to Alma 11:37.
>
> And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the Kingdom of heaven: therefore how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins.

Alma 11:37 points out the condition for being saved, namely, being out of one's sins.

Lastly, Moroni 10:32, one of the final verses of the Book of Mormon, helps highlight the connection between sanctification, grace, and justification in early LDS belief.

> Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

Moroni 10:32 is an often-cited passage for LDS members because it reminds them that our perfection is found "in him." That is to say, it reminds us that God's grace is sufficient for each person's perfection. That being said, Moroni 10:32 also gives the condition for receiving that grace: "If ye shall deny yourselves of all

ungodliness…" Thus one sees that Smith's arch-legalism places sanctification prior to justification. Before God's perfecting/exalting grace can be activated in one's life, he or she must have stopped sinning.

Both 2 Nephi and Moroni speak of grace being operative only after certain conditions are met. The conditions are that one has done all that can be done, or in Moroni's words, one has denied himself of all ungodliness. Ether highlights another feature of Smith's vision for salvation; one must retain a remission of sins. It is not enough to have done all one can and to have received the grace of forgiveness, one must also maintain their remission of sins by discontinuing all sin. In fact, The Book of Mormon sees the goal to be even more than abstaining from sin, but actually abhorrence of sin.[10]

Further, Mosiah 4 highlights a repentant spirit among the Nephites, whereby they cry out for the atoning blood of Christ to be applied to them so that they may receive forgiveness for their sins. In that chapter, the Lord does forgive them but says that this purifying forgiveness comes only to those who put their trust in the Lord and are diligent in keeping the Lord's commands. He says further, "And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them…and if ye do this ye shall always rejoice and be filled with the love of God, and always

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[10] Alma 13:12

retain a remission of your sins."[11] So, repentance is required to receive forgiveness, but continued keeping of the commands (and not sinning) is required to retain that forgiveness.

One idea that is borne in this stage is that real repentance is more than guilt, contrition, and a desire to turn from past sin. Both in the verse quoted above and in Alma 42:24, it is made clear that only the truly penitent will receive the fullness of salvation (eternal life). Because of the atonement, all men are resurrected and brought into the presence of God for judgment where they will be judged according to their works. It is here that the rubber meets the road, for only the truly repentant are fully saved when measured by the bar of God. As is hinted in the four verses above, the person who will stand to gain the fullness of salvation is the one who has repented of his/her sins and retained the remission of sins by denying him/herself of all ungodliness. In fact, Alma 34 makes this point clearly. In verse 32, he says, "This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God." In verse 35 of that same chapter, Alma warns,

> For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.

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[11] Mosiah 4:10, 12

Alma makes a strong case that at the judgment that follows this life, humankind will be divided into two camps: those sealed with the Holy Spirit based upon their true repentance and the works that follow from that, and those who did not truly repent, who are sealed by the devil and are subject to him.

Second Nephi 31:4-20 provides an interesting summary of these doctrines. First, Nephi draws on the example of Jesus, who would express his willingness to be obedient to the Father through baptism, and concludes that this is the narrow gate of salvation. In 2 Nephi 31:10, Nephi asks, “my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?” Nephi then shows the gateway to the path of eternal life is repentance of sins and baptism. Verse 17 declares that the remission of sins follows these two acts. However, eternal life is not yet obtained, for while Christ’s merits are sufficient to bring one onto the path, and are necessary for forgiveness, they are not sufficient for eternal life. Verses 16 and 20 reveal, “Unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved.” Staying on this path is said to lead one to eternal life, and the path includes doing the commandments of the Father and the Son.[12] Thus, the grace obtained through the atonement is necessary for entrance into the path of eternal life, but it is not sufficient for

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[12] 2 Nephi 31:18

eternal life. From these verses in the Book of Mormon, one sees that the grace of the atonement for eternal life is received through repentance and baptism, by keeping the commandments of the Lord, and by enduring to the end.

This view is supported by two revelations that Smith received around the time of the publication of the Book of Mormon. The first of these revelations was received in June of 1829. Here, God clearly spells out to Joseph, "And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God."[13] The second revelation came in July of 1830. In this revelation, God spoke to Joseph and demanded, "Keep my commandment continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come."[14] Both of these revelations demonstrate the key actions humans must take to receive the grace of eternal life: enduring to the end and keeping the commandments.

A perfect summary of the doctrine of grace at this time is found in Joseph Smiths "inspired" alteration of Romans 4:16.[15] Smith changes the verse from

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[13] D&C 14:7; see also 1 Nephi 22:31

[14] D&C 25:15

[15] D&C 45:60-61 (March 1831) contains a divine injunction that Joseph Smith "translate" the New Testament. According to LDS history, the Bible became corrupt over the centuries, and many plain and precious truths were lost. The LDS church teaches that Smith's "translations" of the Bible restore it to its original form, and thus bring back the original gospel as it was known by the Apostles.

"Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace…" to, "Therefore, ye are justified of faith and works, through grace…" At this early stage, Mormonism seems to view grace as God's forgiveness of sins conditioned on belief in Christ, true repentance and baptism. The gift of eternal life, which itself is the fullness of salvation, is obtained by those who have received forgiveness of sins, retained their remission of sins by enduring to the end, and kept the commandments of God. Receiving the grace of eternal life, then, is a cooperative arrangement between the grace of God and the keeping of the commandments of the individual. As Alma 34 pointed out, if one does not add to the grace of God true repentance, he/she is subjected to the spirit of the devil and is sealed to him.

LDS Grace, 1831-1835 (Kirtland period): True Repentance and Progression

There are two major threads of development in the doctrine of grace that leads to eternal life that are discernible in the years immediately following the publication of the Book of Mormon. While the term, "grace," occurs over 125 times in the New Testament, it is only found twenty times in the Book of Mormon, and only four of those uses are in the context of salvation.[16] An even more

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[16] Donald P. Olsen, "Understanding the Scope of the Grace of Christ," *Sunstone* 9, no. 2 (1984): 21.

striking fact is that, after 1831, "justification by grace" never again appears in LDS scripture.[17] Rather than a focus on the New Testament doctrine of justification by grace, the thrust of development in LDS grace in the years immediately following the publication of the Book of Mormon is a concern about knowing who is truly repentant. Two revelations received in 1831 serve to make clear what repentance involves. The first is D&C 42:25-26, which says, "But he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; But if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out."[18] Here repentance is linked invariably with a forsaking (doing it no more) of the sin. If repentance is true, forgiveness comes. If the sin is committed again, the person was not truly repentant and thus does not receive forgiveness.

The second revelation came in August of 1831. In this revelation, the Lord pronounces, "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them." Here one sees with

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[17] Blake T. Ostler, "The Development of the Mormon Concept of Grace," 69.

[18] In commenting on this passage, President Spencer W. Kimball points out the vital importance of the phrase, "with all his heart." He says, "There can be no reservations, it must be an all-out unconditional surrender." See Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret book, 1972), 184.

crystal clear clarity what repentance involves; it is a forsaking of sin. In D&C 58:42-43, there is an additional feature which also was hinted at in Ether 2:15. Forgiveness is received only upon the repentance of one's sins, meaning one does not only give up some particular sin, but rather, forsakes all his/her sins. Here again one sees perfection (sanctification) required prior to receiving forgiveness for one's past sins.

A year later, on April 26th of 1832, at a general council of the church, Smith reported the words he claimed the Lord was revealing, saying, "And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God." This revelation, now known as D&C 82:7, cements the understanding towards which Mormonism had been moving. God's grace for salvation is operative in the life of the repentant person. The repentant person is the one who confesses his/her sin and forsakes it, and thus does not commit sin again. However, if one does commit a sin again, the covering over of sins provided by the atonement is removed and that person stands guilty again before God.

Earlier in 1832, Smith received a vision that has been called, "The seminal statement of the nature of salvation in Mormon thought."[19] This revelation which,

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[19] Ostler, 70.

due to its import, is sometimes referred to as, “The Vision,”[20] added detail to the LDS vision of the afterlife, a teaching that touches most, if not all, other LDS beliefs and practices. This vision, found in D&C 76, taught Smith “many important points touching the salvation of man [that] had been taken from the Bible, and it appeared that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body, the term ‘Heaven,’ as intended for the Saints’ eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one.”[21] This, then, marks the second major thrust of the early years of development of the doctrine of grace that leads to eternal life. This thrust moved toward variegated rewards based on merit and a law of progression that moved one toward the highest heaven (eternal life).[22] This idea blooms in Joseph’s King Follett discourse of 1844, and finds its lasting expression in Lorenzo Snow’s still oft’ cited couplet, “As man now is, God once

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[20] Robert Millet, *Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2010), 81.

[21] Introduction to D&C 76.

[22] Some LDS members today speculate that if a person were to merit a celestial resurrection, they might progress to the point where they were able to qualify for a celestial sphere. However, as Matthew Brown points out, the LDS church leadership has denied the validity of that belief. See Matthew Brown, *The Plan of Salvation*, (American Fork: Covenant Communications, 2002), 180-183.

was, as God now is, man may be."[23]

Smith himself elaborated on the goal of progression at his school of theology in Kirtland, Ohio. In 1834-1835, Smith taught these classes on theology in Kirtland to a class of elders as a way to prepare that group for missionary service. In these lectures,[24] Smith revealed that becoming like God in this life

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[23] Some evangelicals have felt other influential Christian leaders (like Fuller President, Richard Mouw) have attempted to extend an olive branch to the LDS by chastising evangelicals who continue to quote the Snow couplet and Smith's King Follett discourse as a way to show the huge divide between LDS and Christian theology, maintaining this teaching is no longer current (perhaps himself taking a cue from former Prophet/President Gordon B. Hinckley's whose interviews in the late 90's and early 2000's seemed to downplay that part of LDS belief). While this chastisement is well intentioned, it is unwarranted, for, as Ronald Huggins has demonstrated, the Snow couplet and the teaching it highlights is very much alive and well within Mormonism, and thus ought to be seen as a current LDS teaching. See Ronald V. Huggins, "Lorenzo Snow's Couplet: 'As Man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be': 'No Functioning place in Present-day Mormon Doctrine?' A Response to Richard Mouw," *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 3 (2006), 549-68. It is true that leaders in the LDS church often emphasize different things than they did a generation or so ago. However, the LDS church continues to teach their distinctive vision of the afterlife and their unique pathway to it in their "in house" manuals and at their conferences. Though the tone may be different, the content remains the same.

[24] These lectures, entitled, "The Lectures on Faith," were delivered in 1834-1835, and published as the Doctrine of the Doctrine and Covenants beginning in 1835. Beginning in 1920 the Lectures were no longer published within the standard works. Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, one of three LDS Apostles appointed to look into whether or not the LDS church should remove the lectures from the standard works, said, "The reason they were taken out was that they were not revelations; they were only helps." Joseph Fielding Smith also noted that the lectures presented a view of the Godhead that is at odds with later developments of the Godhead. Lecture five states that God the Father is a personage of Spirit, and that the Holy Ghost is the shared mind of the Father and

was a matter of faith. Smith records, "When men begin to live by faith they begin to draw near to God; and when faith is perfected they are like him."[25] Further, Smith reasoned, "what constitutes the real difference between a saved person and one not saved is—the difference in the degree of their faith—one's faith has become perfect enough to lay hold upon eternal life, and the other's has not." Real faith then perfects the faithful so that he/she may lay hold of eternal life. "Salvation," Smith argued, "consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possess and nothing else; and no being can possess it but himself or one like him."[26] In these lectures Smith does not move away from his standard of perfection, but he does seem to indicate that obtaining the state whereby one would inherit eternal life (being like Jehovah[27]) may involve more of

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Son. These teachings are out of place with the LDS church's current teaching that God the Father is a personage of flesh, and that the Holy Ghost is a personage of Spirit. For a more detailed look into this matter, see Leland H. Gentry, "What of the Lectures on Faith," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 1 (1978): 5-20.

[25] Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1835), Lecture 7:8.

[26] Ibid., Lecture 7:9.

[27] Apostle Stephen L. Richards' (1879-1959) 1944 pamphlet published by the LDS church, *About Mormonism*, states that through progression, man may become "as intelligent and as omnipotent as God himself. " This pamphlet was later re-published by the church in 1959, and was changed to read that man may, through progression, "acquire unlimited intelligence and ultimately obtain the perfection which the Lord has promised to the truly faithful."

a process than a one-time event. A perfect faith will result in eternal life, but that faith may take time to develop.

This position is rooted in a revelation Smith received in May of 1833 (D&C 93). Here the Lord prefaces His revelation with the promise, "every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am."[28] What is significant is that the revelation also reveals that Jesus himself progressed "grace upon grace" until he received a fullness. In the same way, humans, by keeping the commandments, "shall receive of his fullness."[29] So, by keeping the commandments one attains eternal life, but this is a process. Certainly the process needs to come to a conclusion prior to death (end of probationary period) to receive the benefits of eternal life, a position adamantly defended by latter LDS authorities like President/Prophet Spencer Kimball and Apostle Bruce R. McKonkie.

In sum, one sees that in the years immediately following the publication of The Book of Mormon, there is a move toward variegated rewards in the afterlife, with eternal life being the highest gift God can give. This gift is given to those

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[28] D&C 93:1

[29] Ibid., 93:20. D&C 93 is also important in the development of Smith's doctrine of man. In vs. 23 he obliterates the creator/creature dichotomy by stating, "Ye were also in the beginning with the Father." Similarly, just as Jesus progressed grace for grace to become deity, so humankind may follow that same destiny, progressing grace upon grace.

who, by faith, truly repent and keep the Lord's commands. The expectation is not that this will happen at once, but it is required before death.

LDS Grace from 1835 to Present: Institutional Conceptions of Grace

Though this time period covers 175 years, one does not see as much change in the doctrine of grace as seen in the first five years. However, one can see certain themes stressed and analyzed in much greater detail. The development of the doctrine of grace will be organized into four categories: i) conditional vs. unconditional atonement, ii) the insufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for eternal life, iii) the need for continual keeping of the Lord's commands, and iv) true repentance.

Conditional vs. **Unconditional Atonement**

Though the dual nature (conditional and unconditional) of the atonement was present from the beginning stages of Mormonism, in the span of years following Joseph Smith this doctrine has been articulated with much more clarity and precision. The fourth President of the LDS church, Wilford Woodruff (President/Prophet from 1887-1898), stated,

> When men are called upon to repent of their sins, the call has reference to their own individual sins, not to Adam's transgressions. What is called the original sin was atoned for through the death of Christ irrespective of any action on the part of man; also man's individual sin was atoned for by the same sacrifice, but on condition of his obedience to the gospel plan of salvation when proclaimed in his hearing.[30]

Here one sees that the atonement has two natures, one is effective irrespective of human interaction and the other is conditional. The first healed the effects of the fall; the second heals the effects of individual sin. Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth President/Prophet of the LDS church, spoke a similar message.

> Redemption from the original sin is without faith or works; redemption from our own sins is given through faith and works. *Both are the gifts of free grace*; but while one is a gift *forced* upon us unconditionally, the other is a gift merely *offered* to us conditionally. The redemption of the one is *compulsory*; the reception of the other is *voluntary*. Man cannot, by any possible act, prevent his redemption from the fall; but he can utterly refuse and prevent his redemption from the penalty of his own sins.[31]

This message continues to be taught today. In fact, today's LDS missionaries are taught that humans ultimately come to the earth so that they can inherit immortal bodies and dwell with God in life after death. The "human predicament" is that we are kept from this goal due to physical and spiritual death. From the moment we are born, because we are yet mortal, we begin to die physically, and from the moment we begin exercising our agency, we make

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[30] Wilford Woodruff, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 72.

[31] Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, ed. Bruce R. McConkie (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, 1955), 10.

wrong choices and thereby become unworthy of God's kingdom. It is a predicament because we are totally without the ability to redeem ourselves from this fallen condition; we can neither solve the problem of physical or spiritual death.[32]

It is taught that because we did not, by our choice, bring about our physical death, Jesus overcomes it for all of us. This is not the case with spiritual death, however, since we did bring it upon ourselves due to the bad use of our agency.[33]

Tad Callister, current General Authority (Presidency of the Seventy) of the LDS church, is in agreement with this basic formulation. He understands the atonement of Jesus to correct the first death for all men without any effort on their own. He also understands the atonement to correct "the second spiritual death on an individual basis for those who repent, since each of us who has sinned must individually contribute to our own redemption, 'For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23)."[34]

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[32] BYU independent study course: *Missionary Preparation 073: Teaching Basic Gospel Principles*, course completed June 2007.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Tad Callister, *The Infinite Atonement* (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 2000), 46.

LDS Apostle Russell M. Nelson espoused perhaps the clearest statement of this doctrine in 2003. He stated bluntly, "Thanks to the Atonement, the gift of immortality is *unconditional*. The greater gift of eternal life, however, is *conditional*. In order to qualify, one must deny oneself of ungodliness and honor the ordinances and covenants of the temple."[35]

It is important to note that both the unconditional and conditional aspects of the atonement are considered a gift. Both are grace. As General Authority church leader Jorge F. Zeballos said at general conference in 2009,

> Salvation and eternal life would not be possible if it were not for the Atonement, brought about by our Savior, to whom we owe everything. But in order for these supreme blessings to be effective in our lives, we should first do our part, 'for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23). Let us with faith, enthusiasm, dedication, responsibility, and love do all that is within our reach, and we will be doing all that is possible to achieve the impossible…[36]

From these quotes one may clearly see this unique aspect of the LDS doctrine of the atonement.[37] Traditional Christian atonement views the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus offered to all who believe, but effective for none who do not. That is, it is 100% conditional, and that condition is turning to Christ and trusting in his atoning death for the forgiveness of sins. In LDS theology, the fall of Adam

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[35] Russell M. Nelson, "Divine Love," *Ensign* (February 2003): 24. Italics original.

[36] Jorge F. Zeballos, "Attempting the Impossible," *Ensign* (November 2009): 33.

[37] Bruce C. Hafen, "The Atonement: All for All," *Ensign* (May 2004): 97.

brought with it physical death to humankind, and effectively separated humans from ever dwelling with God and being like him for eternity (first spiritual death). The Atonement unconditionally heals these physical and spiritual effects of the fall by guaranteeing every human a resurrection from the dead to enjoy fellowship with God, even if it is only a short time as they are judged. This grace is unconditional and reaches every human. With the effects of the fall neutralized, the second spiritual death is the great hurdle to overcome if one is to partake of eternal life. This second spiritual death is due to individual sin and is overcome by the grace of God to all who repent and keep the commands of the Lord. It is certainly still by grace that one is saved of this death, but it is set on conditions. It is grace because LDS theology maintains that receiving the gift of eternal life would be impossible without the sacrifice of Jesus, and conditional because without meeting the conditions set out by the LDS church, the gift cannot be received. These conditions include faithfully doing all you can do (2 Nephi 25:23), denying yourself of all ungodliness (Moroni 10:32), keeping the commandments, repenting, and observing the ordinances of the church.[38]

LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie said,

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[38] It should also be noted that if one lived in the era prior to 1890, one would also have had to abide by the teachings of D&C 132. This revelation received by Smith in July of 1843 was called “the new and everlasting covenant,” and was “instituted for the fullness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fullness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned.” Damnation here refers to a person whose progression to Godliness has been stopped short of its

> Men are thus saved by grace alone, in the sense of being resurrected; they are saved by grace coupled with obedience, in the sense of gaining eternal life. The gospel plan is to save men in the celestial kingdom hence Paul teaches salvation by grace through faith, through obedience, through accepting Christ, through keeping the commandments.[39]

In LDS theology, then, grace alone saves one from the effects of Adam's sin (apart from faith), but faith in Christ alone is not enough to access the grace one needs to be exalted. The conditions one needs to meet to receive that gift (eternal life) will be explored in the next few sections.

The Insufficiency of Christ's Sacrifice for Eternal Life

In 1842, Joseph Smith wrote a letter to John Wentworth, a newspaper editor, who had inquired with Smith as to the teachings of the LDS church. In His response to John Wentworth, Joseph summed up basic LDS teaching with

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goal. The person reaching for eternal life (the kind of life God lives) would have to abide by this new and everlasting covenant, which is better known as the Principal of Plural Marriage (Polygamy). The revelation was adamant that "except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory." When Smith gave this "everlasting covenant" he had already taken a number of wives, and the covenant was ended (or at least suspended) in 1890 under great pressure from the Federal government.

[39] Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, vol. 2, *Acts – Philippians* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), 498.

thirteen points. Those points, with some revision,[40] have become official doctrine and are published with every Pearl of Great Price, one of the LDS standard works of scripture. The third article of faith states, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." It is clear that being "saved" here means more than just saved from Adam's transgression (see article Two), and is referring to the fullness of salvation/eternal life. What saves us is the atonement; however, while the Atonement is necessary, faith in the sacrifice is not sufficient. Rather, it is obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel that allows the atonement to do its atoning work for the individual. Following Smith's lead, in the period after Smith's assassination, LDS authorities began to stress the necessity of human activity for eternal life. Christ had done what was needed to open the door to eternal life, now it was up to the individual to live up to their end of the bargain and meet the demands of worthiness for eternal life. Brigham Young, second President/Prophet of the LDS church expressed his understanding that Christ

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[40] The main change occurred in the wording of the fourth article. The original wording of the fourth article served as an explanation of the third article, which read, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." The fourth article spelled out what those "ordinances" were: faith, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost. In the 1902 edition of the Pearl of Great Price, the articles were published, and the term "ordinances of the Gospel" was changed in the fourth article to "first principles and ordinances of the Gospel." Apparently there is some debate as to whether faith and repentance are ordinances or not. Joseph Smith seems to have applied both terms to them. See Lyndon W. Cook, "The Articles of Faith," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 2 (1977), 254-256.

has done all he can, and now it is up to the individual to attain eternal life. He said,

> The Lord has revealed to us a plan by which we may be saved both here and hereafter. God has done everything we could ask, and more than we could ask. The errand of Jesus to earth was to bring his brethren and his sisters back into the presence of the Father; he has done his part of the work, and it remains for us to do ours. There is not one thing that the Lord could do for the salvation of the human family that he has neglected to do; and it remains for children of men to receive the truth or reject it; all that can be accomplished for their salvation, independent of them, has been accomplished in and by the Savior….[41]

In another streak of clarity, Brigham Young professed,

> However much we may profess attachment to God and his cause we are not entitled to the blessings and privileges of his kingdom until we become citizens therein. How can we do this? By repenting of our sins, and obeying the requirements of the Gospel of the Son of God which has been delivered to us. Hundreds and thousands of people have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and repented of their sins, and have had the Holy Spirit to witness unto them that God is love, that they loved him and that he loved them, and yet they are not in his Kingdom. They have not complied with the necessary requirements, they have not entered in at the door.[42]

Brigham Young felt strongly that Jesus' work had opened the door and it is now up to the individual to achieve what is necessary for eternal life. It is clear that Young sees entrance to God's kingdom as requiring much more than faith. Repenting and trusting Jesus may open the door to eternal life, but entering the

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[41] Brigham Young, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 32.

[42] Ibid., 63.

door requires much more. Thus, faith in Jesus' work is insufficient for eternal life. The Atonement is absolutely necessary, but not sufficient, for eternal life.

David O. McKay, President/Prophet of the LDS church from 1951-1970, stressed human obedience and thus the insufficiency of Christ's sacrifice as well. He said,

> Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World, has given us the means whereby man may obtain eternal happiness and peace in the Kingdom of our Father, but man must work out his own salvation through obedience to the eternal principles and ordinances of the gospel.[43]

Jesus' work is finished, and provides the *foundation* upon which humans must build if they are to gain eternal life.

The tenth President/Prophet, Joseph Fielding Smith (1970-1972), spoke in the same manner, claiming,

> This is the gospel of merit. Every man shall receive that which he is entitled to receive. Every soul shall be blessed according to the diligence, willingness and integrity put forth in the service of the Lord. The man who will not keep his commandments, the Lord will not exalt…*In order to obtain the exaltation we must accept the gospel and all its covenants; and take upon us the obligations which the Lord has offered; and walk in the light and the understanding of the truth; and 'live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God' (citing D&C 84:44)*.[44]

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[43] David O. McKay, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 211.

[44] Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 43. Italics original.

Spencer Kimball (twelfth Prophet/President, 1973-1985) spoke plainly on this matter as well. He felt strongly that the Christian view of the sufficiency of faith in Christ for salvation was in error, saying,

> One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation.[45]

Faith in Christ is insufficient, because the work of Christ is insufficient for eternal life. In LDS theology, faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice only opens the door to eternal life, but it is up to each individual to walk through the door by keeping the commandments, repenting, and observing the current ordinances of the church. This belief persists among contemporary LDS church authorities.

During President Spencer W. Kimball's Presidency, LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie called the belief that a person is justified by grace alone, by faith alone, apart from works of the law to be the "second greatest heresy of Christendom."[46] Interestingly, while he felt this belief is a "mania that has now taken possession of millions of devout but deluded people," he also testifies that

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[45] Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 206. See also *The Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 1996), 36.

[46] Bruce R. McConkie, "What Think Ye of Salvation by Grace?" *Brigham Young University 1983-84 Fireside and Devotional Speeches* (Provo: University Publications, 1984), 45.

salvation comes by grace alone, with "no works on our part required."[47] What he means by this is that there was no work on our part required for God to create the earth, provide for a probationary estate, or send his son. All of this is free grace apart from works. Further, McConkie teaches that no works can earn God's grace, and thus humans must "turn to Christ and rely on his merits and mercy and grace."[48]

What McConkie says about this is that God, in his own grace, established the plan of salvation and provided the atonement which, when one has received its blessing, gains eternal life. All of this is given by sheer grace as a gift due to no effort on our part. However, as McConkie explains, to gain the blessing of the atonement, one must do much more than just have faith. He says, "Man cannot be saved by grace alone; as the Lord lives, he must keep the commandments; he must work the works of righteousness…The blood of Christ was shed as a free gift of wondrous grace, but the Saints are cleansed by the blood after they keep the commandments."[49] He adds, "we testify that no man, as long as the earth shall stand, or the heavens endure, or God continues to be God, no man shall ever be saved in the kingdom of God, in the celestial kingdom of heaven, without

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[47] McKonkie, "What Think Ye," 44, 47.

[48] Ibid., 48.

[49] Ibid.

doing the works of righteousness."[50] In LDS theology then, the plan of salvation is an unearned grace, accessing the atonement of Jesus requires much more than simple faith. This implies keeping the commandments. As another General Authority A. Theodore Tuttle said, "Eternal life is the quality of existence in the presence of our Heavenly Father which comes upon conditions…we must earn it by obedience."[51]

Modern-day LDS church publications, which were approved by the First Presidency, continue to espouse the insufficiency of Christ's work for eternal life. President Howard Hunter, speaking at General Conference in 1973 and quoted in the Missionary Preparation Student Manual, said that while faith, repentance, baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit were first principles of the gospel,

> After complying with these four, there must be a lifetime of compliance with the laws and commandments of the Lord…The First principles alone are not sufficient; man is thereafter accountable in the eternal judgment for what he has done in life, whether good or evil. The atonement was for this very purpose, to bring about the resurrection and subsequent judgment of all men.[52]

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[50] McKonkie, *What Think Ye*, 49.

[51] A. Theodore Tuttle, "The Atonement and Our Part in It," *Brigham Young University 1983-84 Fireside and Devotional Speeches* (Provo: University Publications, 1984), 42.

[52] Howard Hunter, "This is my Gospel," *Ensign* (July 1973); *Missionary Preparation Student Manual: Religion 130* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 2005), 100-101; BYU independent Study course: *Missionary Preparation 073: Teaching Basic Gospel Principles,* course completed July 2007.

Gospel Principles states, “Christ did his part to atone for our sins. Each of us must repent and obey to make Christ’s atonement effective in our lives.”[53] This stress on human obedience to make Christ’s atonement effective separates the LDS gospel from the traditional Christian view of salvation as outlined above, where turning to Christ in faith is sufficient for eternal life.

The Modern LDS church publication *True to the Faith* teaches,

> The Savior has declared that eternal life is “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7)…To receive this gift, we must meet certain conditions. We must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and endure faithfully to the end. We must receive the ordinances of salvation: baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (for men), and the temple endowment and marriage sealing. By receiving these ordinances and keeping the associated covenants, we come unto Christ and ultimately receive the gift of eternal life.[54]

In sum, the institutional wisdom of the LDS church dictates that while faith in Jesus’ atonement is necessary for the fullness of salvation, it merely provides one the opportunity to merit eternal life. The LDS church teaches that through the atonement of Jesus the door is gracefully opened to eternal life, but that Jesus’ work/merit/righteousness is not enough to gain eternal life, nor is faith in his atoning sacrifice. There is further work to be done, beginning at true repentance and leading to the keeping of the Lord’s commands and observing the ordinances of the church.

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[53] *Gospel Principles* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 68-69.

[54] *True to the Faith*, 19.

LDS authorities have noted that observing the "first Principles of the gospel," namely faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, do not merit one the fullness of salvation. Church authority Bruce Porter calls these first principles "mandatory prerequisites" for exaltation, as they are "preparatory steps to entering the temple and fulfilling the conditions of exaltation."[55] It is currently taught in the LDS church that "we cannot return to God's presence without [temple ordinances]."[56] President Joseph Fielding Smith also taught that the fullness of the priesthood is required for eternal life, saying, "There is no exaltation in the kingdom of God without the fullness of priesthood…These blessings are obtained through obedience to the ordinances and covenants of the house of the Lord."[57] Joseph Fielding Smith goes so far as to call the temple and its ordinances the "Pearl of Great Price." He assures that those who have entered into the covenants in the temple are "on the road to receive all the father has, all that He can give—exaltation."[58]

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[55] Bruce Porter, "The First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel," *Ensign* (October 2000): 15.

[56] President Howard W. Hunter, "A Temple-Motivated People," *Ensign* (February 1995): 5; see also *Conference Report*, October 1994, 118. These quotes are from the *Missionary Preparation Student Manual,* 111.

[57] Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, 132. Quoted in the *Missionary Preparation Student Manual*, 111.

[58] Smith*, Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, 225.

It is clear that on this LDS version of the gospel, trusting in God's grace for salvation is not enough to enter eternity with our Heavenly Father. We must rely on our own righteousness if we would dwell with Him. Underscoring this understanding, the July 2011 *Ensign* magazine told its readership, "If we are righteous, we will return to live with [our Heavenly Father]."[59] In this model, one's own righteousness is what commends a person to the Father, not Christ and his imputed righteousness. As former President/Prophet David O. McKay reminds us, the gospel tells us the good news that we may be exalted, but it also tells us that to rise up, one must "rise by his own efforts."[60]

In the next two sections, we will look into what the church means when it says one must keep (obey) the commandments and truly repent. Each of these sections can be seen as an elaboration of the insufficiency of Christ's work.

Continual Keeping of the Lord's Commands

The researcher does not know any leader of the past or present LDS church who thinks that any human besides Jesus will live a sinless life, both in terms of sins of omission and commission. Clearly, due to the stress on the

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[59] "Work is an Eternal Principle," *Ensign* (July 2011): 8.

[60] David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1957), 130.

necessity of the atonement, there is an understanding that every human will fall short of the glory of God because of each person's individual sin. However, while a perfect life is not expected, it is expected that once one puts faith in Christ, they will keep the commands from that point on. Jesus forgives past sins, but from the point of faith in Christ, one must continually keep the commandments of the Lord if they are to retain their remission of sins. LDS President/Prophet Spencer Kimball taught, "The scripture is most precise. First, one repents. Having gained that ground he then must live the commandments of the Lord to retain his vantage point. This is necessary to secure complete forgiveness."[61]

Kimball understands that humanity has fallen short of God's glory, but having repented of those shortcomings, each individual, if he/she is to attain eternal life, must keep all the commandments from there on out.[62] To this effect Kimball said, "This progress toward eternal life is a matter of achieving perfection. Living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins and assures one of exaltation through that perfection which comes by complying with the

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[61] Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 43.

[62] This baptismal covenant that is made (to keep all the commandments) is drawn from Mosiah 18:10.

formula the Lord gave us."[63] Here, Kimball is in agreement with seventh President (1918-1945) Heber J. Grant, who instructed,

> If you want to know how to be saved, I can tell you; it is by keeping the commandments of God. No power on earth, no power beneath the earth, will ever prevent you or me or any Latter-day Saint from being saved, except ourselves. We are the architects of our lives, not only of the lives here, but the lives to come in the eternity. We ourselves are able to perform every duty and obligation that God has required of men. No commandment was ever given to us but that God has given us the power to keep that commandment. If we fail, we, and we alone, are responsible for the failure, because God endows His servants, from the President of the Church down to the humblest member, with all the ability, all the knowledge, all the power that is necessary, faithfully, diligently, and properly to discharge every duty and every obligation that rests upon them, and we, and we alone, will have to answer if we fail in this regard.[64]

Grant and Kimball both see the keeping of the commandments as much more than just being important; they are essential in obtaining eternal life. Grant stresses the continued keeping of the commandments, reminding his followers that there are no excuses for not keeping them. He stressed that God has given humans all they need to keep all the commandments all the time and that this is what is required for eternal life. Kimball and Grant are not breaking new ground with their stress on keeping the commandments. Fourth President Wilford

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[63] Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 208-209. See also church manual *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 386.

[64] Heber J. Grant, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), 38.

Woodruff boasted, “If I ever obtain a full salvation it will be by my keeping the laws of God.”[65]

Tenth President/Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith offered this sobering thought, “To enter the *celestial* and obtain exaltation it is necessary that the *whole law be kept*.”[66] He then asks, “Do you desire to enter into the celestial Kingdom and receive eternal life? Then be willing to keep all of the commandments the Lord may give you.”[67] In another place Joseph Fielding Smith offered, “*But to be exalted one must keep the whole law*… to receive the exaltation of the righteous, in other words eternal life, the commandments of the Lord must be kept in *all* things.”[68] And, in case one is confused by what he means by the “whole law,” Joseph Fielding Smith offers this clarification:

> *Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are those who are members of the Church of the Firstborn*; in other words, those who keep all the commandments of the Lord (D&C 76:54, 67, 71, 94-95, 102; 77:11; 78:21; 88:5; 93:22). There will be many who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who shall *never* become members of the Church of the Firstborn. The higher ordinances in the temple of God

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[65] Wilford Woodruff, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 71.

[66] Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 11th ed. (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1956), 206. Italics original.

[67] Ibid., 207.

[68] Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* 6.

> pertain to exaltation in the celestial kingdom…In order to receive this blessing, one must keep the *full law*, must abide the law by which that kingdom is governed; for 'He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory' (D&C 88:22).[69]

Apostle Bruce R. McKonkie, a contemporary of President Joseph Fielding Smith, was also concerned that LDS members understand the need to keep the commandments of the Lord in order that they might obtain the forgiveness they so desperately need to take hold of eternal life. He said,

> Complete forgiveness is reserved for those only who turn their whole hearts to the Lord and begin to keep all of his commandments not just those commandments disobeyed in the past, but those in all fields. 'He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven.[70]

Influential BYU professor and LDS historian/theologian/apologist Hugh Nibley said, "The Atonement is either dead to us or it is in full effect. It is the supreme sacrifice made for us, and to receive it we must live up to every promise and covenant related to it."[71] He goes on to say, "Unless we live up to every covenant, we are literally in Satan's power…"[72] The most basic covenant LDS members make is their baptism covenant in which they promise to keep all of

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[69] Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 41-42.

[70] Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed.* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 295.

[71] Hugh W. Nibley, "The Meaning of the Atonement," *Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies*, Reprint from *Approaching Zion*, vol. 9 of *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 589.

[72] Nibly, "The Meaning of the Atonement, 590.

God's commands. Nibley anticipates the objection many have to this requirement of keeping the commandments to the end of one's life before they receive the benefits of the atonement, saying, "The objection to the law of consecration is that it is hard to keep."[73] To this he replies, "We are clearly told in the Book of Mormon that when God commands us to do something, no matter how hard, he will open the way for us if we put our hearts into it."[74] Then he quotes 1 Nephi 3:7, in which God promises never to command something without making it possible to obey. Thus, to this LDS theologian, the atonement is of no value if the LDS member keeps every command of God.

Current Apostle Russell M. Nelson opens his famous address, *Perfection Pending*, with the admission, "If I were to ask which of the Lord's commandments is most difficult to keep, many of us would cite Matthew 5:48: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect."[75] After lamenting at the despair this command can bring, he reminds us of 1 Nephi 3:7's promise that "the Lord gives no commandments that are impossible to obey."[76] Nelson urges LDS members to strive to be "as perfect in our sphere as our Heavenly Father is

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[73] Nibley, *The Meaning of the Atonement*, 593.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Russell M. Nelson, *Perfection Pending: And Other Favorite Discourses by Russell M. Nelson* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 3.

[76] Ibid.

in His."[77] This is related to moral living as well as receiving Temple ordinances. Nelson says, "No accountable individual can receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom without the ordinances of the temple."[78] He goes on to say, "Some have disregarded [Jesus'] teachings because they were viewed as being too precise or impractically high!"[79] Yet, Nelson also reminds us that "Moroni taught us how to gain this glorious objective." Quoting from Moroni 10:32-33, he urges LDS members to "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; love God with all your might, mind and strength, then…ye may be perfect in Christ…holy, [and] without spot."[80] While Nelson understands perfection is a lofty goal, one that takes time to achieve, he believes "It awaits all who love Him and keep His commandments."[81]

Recently, General Authority Jorge F. Zeballos again stressed the historic emphasis on keeping the commandments as a necessary requirement for attaining eternal life. Quoting LDS founder Joseph Smith, he said, "And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which

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[77] Nelson, *Perfection Pending*, 4.

[78] Ibid., 7.

[79] Ibid., 8.

[80] Ibid., 9.

[81] Ibid.

is the greatest of all the gifts of God."[82] Zeballos seeks to impart hope to LDS members, showing them that while it is impossible to be exalted on one's own, it is a gift that can be received. However, receiving this gift requires keeping the commandments and enduring to the end. This does not seem possible though as no honest person can say they have totally kept the commandments. What we need is not a law to live up to, but a Savior to live it for us.

> Current (sixteenth) President/Prophet Thomas S. Monson said,
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> It is the celestial glory which we seek. It is in the presence of God we desire to dwell. It is a forever family in which we want membership. Such blessings are earned. A high report card in mortality qualifies us to graduate with honors.[83]

By classifying the eternal blessings as "earned," and something we can qualify for based on our mortal life, Monson clearly distances his gospel from the traditional gospel in which we are qualified for eternal life by Christ's work, not our own.[84]

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[82] Jorge F. Zeballos, "Attempting the Impossible," *Ensign* (November 2009): *33.*

[83] Thomas S. Monson, *An Invitation to Exaltation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 16. This published book is a reprint of an address delivered by President Monson at a satellite broadcast of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on March 4th, 1984.

[84] See John 6:28-29 – Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

By way of summary, the modern formulation of this doctrine will be presented as it is found in the LDS church manual, *Gospel Principles*. In the lesson regarding the requirements of eternal life, the manual states,

> There are specific ordinances we must have received to be exalted…In addition to the required ordinances, there are also many laws we have to obey to qualify for exaltation…In other words, each person must endure in faithfulness, keeping all the Lord's commandments until the end of his life on earth.[85]

As we have already seen, faith in the atoning sacrifice is necessary, but not sufficient, for salvation. According to LDS teaching, God gives a great grace in opening the door to eternal life, and the reception of that gift is a wonderful grace, but in order to qualify for it—in order to be forgiven—all the commandments of God must kept all the time. Notice, too, the emphasis that *Gospel Principles* places on receiving specific ordinances. The conditional side of the atonement is only applied when an individual has received the ordinances with proper priesthood authority. Or, as Apostle Dallin H. Oaks said at the October 2011 General Conference, **"**And so we understand that the Atonement of Jesus Christ gives us the opportunity to overcome the spiritual death that results from sin and, through making and keeping sacred covenants, to have the blessings of eternal life." Eternal life is not based on faith, but on making and *keeping* sacred covenants. Thus, the temple and the ordinances associated with it stand as yet

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[85] *Gospel Principles*, 1979 ed., 226-227.

another law that must be kept, and therefore, strike at the heart of the traditional Christian view of the sufficiency of faith in Christ for eternal life.

With such clear statements from LDS church Apostles and Prophets regarding the necessity of keeping all the commandments in order to gain eternal life, it is puzzling how some influential LDS leaders, while not official authorities, can seemingly ignore these statements and move away from this teaching. This topic will be discussed in greater detail when the LDS Neo-Orthodox challenge is examined.

True Repentance

As we have seen previously, in order to gain all the benefits of the atonement one must meet the conditions required, and one such condition is that a person must be truly repentant. We have already seen that in the year following the organization of the church, Joseph Smith published two revelations pertaining to the identification of true repentance. Early leaders, following Joseph Smith, continued to stress, "Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh, atoned for the sins of all who repent."[86] As repentance is required to take hold of the benefits of the atonement, it was important that people understand the

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[86] Young, 31.

true nature of repentance. In the era after Smith, church leaders continued to pass on instruction regarding what real repentance is.

Fourth President/Prophet Wilford Woodruff said, “And what is repentance? The forsaking of sin. The man who repents, if he be a swearer, swears no more; or a thief, steals no more; he turns away from all former sins and commits them no more.”[87] For Woodruff, then, repentance includes sinning no more. The many church leaders and authorities that would follow Woodruff share this understanding.

During the period that Lorenzo Snow assumed the position of Prophet to the LDS people (1898-1901), Apostle Francis Lyman spoke to the LDS brethren at the LDS church’s 1899 General Conference regarding repentance. He said,

> There is no forgiveness of sin without repentance. Forgiveness does not come by faith alone, nor by promising that we will do better some time. It is necessary that we should cease sinning and begin to do well.[88]

Cessation of sinning is highlighted as a requirement for receiving forgiveness, that great grace of the atonement upon which eternal life hangs.

In an often-quoted statement of sixth President Joseph F. Smith (1901-1918), we see further clarity regarding what true repentance is.

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[87] Woodruff, 71-72.

[88] Francis M. Lyman, *Conference Reports,* April 1899, 38.

> True repentance only is acceptable to God, nothing short of it will answer the purpose. Then what is true repentance? True repentance is not only sorrow for sins, and humble penitence and contrition before God but it involves the necessary of turning away from them, a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light.[89]

Here one sees that repentance is meant to spread to every area of life. Real repentance is not the stopping of a particular sin, but all sin.

Agreeing with his father, Joseph F. Smith, tenth President/Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith held the understanding that repentance involves a discontinuation of sinning, but he also attributes that idea to the Apostle Paul, saying "In other words, Paul taught that true repentance is a complete turning from a sin, never reverting to that sin in the future."[90] Probably out of concern that many LDS members did not understand that repentance required never returning to sin again, Joseph Fielding Smith stressed the importance of full repentance of all sin, teaching,

> It is required of every man that he fully repent, be baptized for the remission of sins, have hands laid on his head for the gift of the Holy

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[89] Joseph F. Smith, *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1878, photo reprint, 1966) 19:190. This statement, made September 30, 1877, is quoted in *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow and published in 1949 (p. 100), in a compilation of Joseph F. Smith's teaching known as *Gospel Doctrine* which was first published in 1919, but was still being published by the church in 1977 (p. 100), and in the 2004 church published manual, The Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual (p. 41).

[90] Joseph Fielding Smith. *Religious Truths Defined* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1959), 273.

> Ghost and for entrance into the Church. If a man tries to get in by some other way he is classed as a thief and robber. Why? Because he is trying to obtain eternal life by fraud! He is trying to obtain a reward of exaltation by counterfeit coin, and this cannot be done.[91]

The stress on full repentance, an act after which the repentant soul never sins again, is related to The Book of Mormon teaching given by Prophet Amulek, who revealed, "God cannot save them in their sins: for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins."[92] From this verse it is clear that one cannot be saved in his sins. If one is to attain eternal life, he/she must therefore be out of his/her sins. George Albert Smith (1945-1951), eighth President/Prophet of the LDS church, reminded LDS church members of this fact at the church's General Conference, saying,

> We must have faith in God, we must repent of our sins, because while we are in a sinful condition we are in no way prepared to enter into the celestial kingdom, and we are informed that if we cannot keep the celestial law we cannot abide in celestial glory.[93]

Eleventh President/Prophet Harold B. Lee (1972-73) spoke often of the miracle of forgiveness that comes to those who follow the Lord's plan of

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[91] Joseph Fielding Smith. *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1956), 152.

[92] Alma 11:37

[93] George Albert Smith, *Conference Report*, October 1926, 102.

salvation. In complete harmony with previous church leaders, Lee assured LDS church members,

> The miracle of forgiveness is available to all of those who turn from their evil doings and return no more, because the Lord has said in a revelation to us in our day: 'Go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth [meaning again] shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God' (D&C 82:7).[94]

To clarify his position, Lee pithily quipped, "In one sentence, repentance means turning from that which we have done wrong in the sight of the Lord and never repeating that mistake again. Then we can have the miracle of forgiveness."[95]

The LDS leader who has, perhaps, focused the most on elucidating the miracle of forgiveness and its relationship to true repentance is twelfth President/Prophet Spencer Kimball. In his famous book, still reprinted and sold at LDS distribution centers worldwide, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, Kimball assured LDS church members that forgiveness can be theirs, but warned,

> Your Heavenly Father has promised forgiveness upon total repentance and meeting all the requirements, but that forgiveness is not granted merely for the asking. There must be works—many works—and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit.[96]

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[94] Harold B. Lee, *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996),120; brackets original.

[95] Harold B. Lee, *Ye Are the Light of the World: Selected Sermons and Writings of Harold B. Lee* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974), 321.

[96] Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 324-325.

Knowing as he did that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God, and that "without repentance there can be no forgiveness, and without forgiveness all the blessings of eternity hang in jeopardy,"[97] Kimball sought to ensure that members of the LDS church fully understand what is required of them for full forgiveness. Thus, he spoke in great detail about the nature of complete/true/full/real repentance.

Perhaps concerned that many people would be tempted to believe that merely desiring to repent would earn forgiveness, Kimball pronounced,

> Desire Is Not Sufficient. In other words, it is not real repentance until one has abandoned the error of his way and started on a new path. Someone has said that there is only one way to quit a bad habit and that is to stop. The saving power does not extend to him who merely wants to change his life. True repentance prods one to action.[98]

Wanting to repent/change is not enough; true repentance moves one to action. One might wonder if trying to get rid of sin is good enough, for many LDS members will say, "God knows my heart, and that I am trying." In anticipation of this sentiment, Kimball wrote, "Nor is trying enough. Trying Is Not Sufficient. Nor

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[97] Moses 6:57. See also Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 117. This passage is quoted in *The Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*: Religion 430 and 431 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 40.

[98] Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness,* 163. See also Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006)*, 39.

is repentance complete when one merely tries to abandon sin."[99] With these teachings, Kimball authoritatively reveals that wanting to change, trying and desiring to abandon sin, is not enough. One must actually do it if one is to receive forgiveness. Still, some LDS members might be tempted to think, "The Lord knows my heart," or ask, "Isn't a broken and contrite heart enough?" In a 2007 General Conference message, Elder Bruce Porter stressed a broken and contrite spirit is not enough for forgiveness, but is rather a precondition of repentance. He said,

> The Savior's perfect submission to the Eternal Father is the very essence of a broken heart and contrite Spirit…A broken heart and a contrite spirit are also preconditions to repentance (2 Nephi 2:6-7, 2 Corinthians 7:10)… Those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit are willing to do anything and everything that God asks of them, without resistance or resentment. We cease doing things our way and learn to do them God's way instead. In such a condition of submissiveness, the Atonement can take effect and true repentance can occur.[100]

Thus, repentance is more than a feeling, desire, or decision to try to do better. Repentance is actually forsaking sin, and until one does so there is no forgiveness.

Lest someone be slothfully tempted to think that the real work of perfection of oneself could wait until the life that is to come, Kimball reminds his followers,

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[99] Ibid., 164.

[100] Bruce D. Porter, "A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit," *Ensign* (November 2007): 32.

"Christ became perfect through overcoming. Only as we overcome shall we become perfect and move toward godhood. As I have indicated previously, the time to do this is now, in mortality."[101] His assessment agrees with Apostle Bruce R. McConkie's view that,

> This life is the time that is given for men to repent and prepare to meet God. Those who have opportunity in this life to accept the truth are obligated to take it; otherwise, full salvation will be denied them. Hopes of reward through so-called *death-bed repentance* are vain.[102]

Kimball provides a simple test for LDS members to use to gauge whether or not they have really repented, and thus if they have the Lord's forgiveness. He announces, "There is one crucial test of repentance. This is abandonment of the sin."[103] How is a person to know if they have repented? One simply needs to examine his/her life and assess whether or not he/she has abandoned sin. Full abandonment of sin may not be easy to do, but it is absolutely required before forgiveness is accessible.

Recently, a conference message by General Authority Jorge F. Zeballos further reinforced this long-held belief that only total repentance evidenced by a discontinuance of all sin will provide forgiveness. He stated, "[God], as our

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[101] Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 210.

[102] McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 631.

[103] Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 163. This passage is quoted in several LDS church publications. See also *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual,* 40; and *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball,* 39.

Father, is always willing and desirous to forgive our errors and weaknesses and the sins we commit subject only to total and sincere repentance."[104] It is clear that partial repentance (overcoming some sins), and insincere repentance evidenced by returning to the sins again in the future will not do. Only a total surrender to the program of the Lord will ensure one of the forgiveness needed to achieve eternal life.

The quality of this abandonment must be permanent in nature. Kimball highlights this fact in a tract published by the LDS church during his Presidency in 1984. The tract reads, "The forsaking of sin must be a permanent one. True repentance does not permit making the same mistake again."[105]

Kimball also assures LDS members that it is not abandonment of one particular sin that is important, but abandonment of all sin. He taught,

> Repentance must involve an all-out, total surrender to the program of the Lord. That transgressor is not fully repentant who neglects his tithing, misses his meetings, breaks the Sabbath, fails in his family prayers, does not sustain the authorities of the Church, breaks the Word of Wisdom, does not love the Lord nor his fellowmen. A reforming adulterer who drinks or curses is not repentant. The repenting burglar who has sex play

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[104] Zeballos, 33.

[105] Spencer W. Kimball, *Repentance Brings Forgiveness*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984). This un-numbered tract still in print today and sold at Deseret Distribution Centers is an adaption of an address Kimball gave to students as an Apostle at Brigham Young University, May 4, 1954. See also Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 176.

> is not ready for forgiveness. God cannot forgive unless the transgressor shows a true repentance which spreads to all areas of his life.[106]

Here Kimball reveals repentance is not limited to refraining from doing evil, but also includes sins of omission. That is, one must also do the good things they ought to do, like tithe, attend all church meetings, and pray enough. Repentance does not merely mean refraining from the big sins, but also includes small things like not drinking hot beverages and consuming the flesh of beasts and fowl only in winter, cold or famine.[107]

Even beyond abandonment of sin, Kimball stresses the Book of Mormon teaching that one must do more than stop sinning to merit forgiveness. One must have cleared the urge to sin out of their life. In his own words, Kimball pointed out,

> This passage [Alma 13:11-12] indicates an attitude which is basic to the sanctification we should all be seeking, and thus to the repentance which merits forgiveness. It is that the former transgressor must have reached a 'point of no return' to sin wherein there is not merely a renunciation but also a deep abhorrence of the sin where the sin becomes most distasteful to him and where the desire or urge to sin is cleared out of his life.[108]

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[106] Kimball, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball*, 43-44.

[107] Both of these prohibitions are found in the Word of Wisdom, D&C 89.

[108] Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 354-355. Brackets mine. See also the *Book of Mormon Student Manual,* 78.

In recent years, the LDS church has continued to stress the need for cessation of sin in order to receive forgiveness, which is required for eternal life. The 2004 LDS church publication, *True to the Faith*, reads,

> Note that you cannot be saved *in your sins*; you cannot receive unconditional salvation simply by declaring your belief in Christ with the understanding that you will inevitably commit sins throughout the rest of your life (see Alma 11:36-37). Through the grace of God, you can be saved *from your sins* (see Helaman 5:10-11). To receive this blessing, you must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, strive to keep the commandments, forsake sin, and renew your repentance and cleansing through the ordinance of the sacrament.[109]

While not as blunt as President Kimball, the forsaking of sin is still noted as a requirement in order to be saved from one's sins. What "forsaking your sins" means was made clear by Apostle Neil L. Anderson in his 2009 conference address on the topic or repentance, saying, "The forsaking of sins implies never returning."[110]

Another LDS church manual, *Gospel Principles*, supports this view, stating,

> Our sincere sorrow should lead us to forsake (stop) our sinning. It does little good to admit that we have sinned if we do not stop doing the evil thing. If we truly repent of our sins, we will do them no more…The Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith: 'By this ye may know if a man repents

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[109] *True to the Faith*, 135.

[110] Neil L. Anderson, "Repent…That I May Heal You," *Ensign* (November 2009): 42.

> of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them' (D&C 58:43).[111]

This stress on the discontinuance of sin as a pre-requisite for forgiveness may be among the key factors in several of Utah's social problems.[112]

As seen earlier, one distinctive aspect of Mormonism is that, from the beginning, it was taught that living a perfect life precedes justification. If, as Joseph Smith taught and the church continues to teach, eternal life is attained only by those who are faithful to meet the conditions required for receiving

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[111] *Gospel Principles*, 1979 ed., 91. Parentheses original.

[112] This may be a strong contributing factor in Utah's high suicide rate and why Utah leads the country in clinical depression and prescribed anti-depressants. Many people, struggling to attain forgiveness but being crushed by the realization that they can never measure up to the standards the church has set to receive it, end up depressed and, in some cases, suicidal. While the LDS tie to the statistics cited has not been proven, the researcher has personally spoken to LDS (and ex-LDS) members who have shared the despair that the LDS religion can breed in the lives of those who understand its doctrines. For information regarding Utah's depression and suicide rate, see Mental Health America study, "Ranking Americas Mental Health," 2007. Further, the 2011 Gallop-Healthways Well-Being index shows that while Utah is a physically healthy state, it is also the most stressed state in the union. The Gallop survey did not conjecture the source of the stress, but the Salt Lake ABC affiliate (ABC4) covered the story and sought answers to the "why" question by asking community members at Salt Lake City's Gateway Mall. The first reported respondent, Leah Burbidge, said, "We put lot of pressure on ourselves to try to do everything perfect." Newsstory, can be found at: http://www.abc4.com/s/h_MIGDX2NEezn3Dk4WitrQ.cspx (accessed June 18, 2011). This may also play a role in former President/Prophet Hinckley's admission, "The most serious problem with which we have to deal is the loss of converts" (Church News, July 7th, 2007, 2). Robinson admits that the realization of what it takes to enter God's eternal kingdom—perfect performance—breeds despair. See Stephen Robinson, *Following Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 32-33.

forgiveness, that is, true repentance and keeping all the commandments all the time, one wonders how the LDS church can genuinely offer its adherents the possibility of eternal life.

One of the most popular ways this distinctive LDS view of the atonement, and the grace it carries with it, is packaged is in a story first told by Apostle Boyd K. Packer; [113]

> There once was a man who wanted something very much. It seemed more important than anything else in his life. In order for him to have his desire, he incurred a great debt.
>
> He had been warned about going into that much debt, and particularly about his creditor. But it seemed so important for him to do what he wanted to do and to have what he wanted right now. He was sure he could pay for it later.
>
> So he signed a contract. He would pay it off some time along the way. He didn't worry too much about it, for the due date seemed such a long time away. He had what he wanted now, and that was what seemed important.
>
> The creditor was always somewhere in the back of his mind, and he made token payments now and again, thinking somehow that the day of reckoning really would never come.
>
> But as it always does, the day came, and the contract fell due. The debt had not been fully paid. His creditor appeared and demanded payment in full.
>
> Only then did he realize that his creditor not only had the power to repossess all that he owned, but the power to cast him into prison as well.
>
> "I cannot pay you, for I have not the power to do so," he confessed.

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[113] This story was first told by Boyd K. Packer at the April 1977 General Conference in a message entitled, "The Mediator." It is available as a 10 min. dramatic mini-movie at http://lds.org/media-library/video/book-of-mormon-presentations?lang=eng&query=mediator#2010-06-05-the-mediator (accessed November 30, 2011). This "gospel parable" was previously published in a less polished form by Edwin F. Parry in his tract, "Saved by Grace Through Obedience." *Scrapbook of Mormon Literature*, vol. 2, ed. by Ben Rich (Chicago: Henry C. Etten & Co., 1911), 320.

“Then,” said the creditor, “we will exercise the contract, take your possessions, and you shall go to prison. You agreed to that. It was your choice. You signed the contract, and now it must be enforced.”

“Can you not extend the time or forgive the debt?” the debtor begged. “Arrange some way for me to keep what I have and not go to prison. Surely you believe in mercy? Will you not show mercy?”

The creditor replied, “Mercy is always so one-sided. It would serve only you. If I show mercy to you, it will leave me unpaid. It is justice I demand. Do you believe in justice?”

“I believed in justice when I signed the contract,” the debtor said. “It was on my side then, for I thought it would protect me. I did not need mercy then, nor think I should need it ever. Justice, I thought, would serve both of us equally as well.”

“It is justice that demands that you pay the contract or suffer the penalty,” the creditor replied. “That is the law. You have agreed to it and that is the way it must be. Mercy cannot rob justice.”

There they were: One meting out justice, the other pleading for mercy. Neither could prevail except at the expense of the other.

“If you do not forgive the debt there will be no mercy,” the debtor pleaded.

“If I do, there will be no justice,” was the reply.

Both laws, it seemed, could not be served. They are two eternal ideals that appear to contradict one another. Is there no way for justice to be fully served, and mercy also?

There is a way! The law of justice can be fully satisfied and mercy can be fully extended—but it takes someone else. And so it happened this time.

The debtor had a friend. He came to help. He knew the debtor well. He knew him to be shortsighted. He thought him foolish to have gotten himself into such a predicament. Nevertheless, he wanted to help because he loved him. He stepped between them, faced the creditor, and made this offer.

“I will pay the debt if you will free the debtor from his contract so that he may keep his possessions and not go to prison.”

As the creditor was pondering the offer, the mediator added, “You demanded justice. Though he cannot pay you, I will do so. You will have been justly dealt with and can ask no more. It would not be just.”

And so the creditor agreed.

The mediator turned then to the debtor. “If I pay your debt, will you accept me as your creditor?”

“Oh yes, yes,” cried the debtor. “You save me from prison and show mercy to me.”

“Then,” said the benefactor, “you will pay the debt to me and I will set

> the terms. It will not be easy, but it will be possible. I will provide a way. You need not go to prison."[114]

This story does an amazing job of summing up much of what this paper has tried to convey regarding the distinctive LDS view of justification, atonement, and thereby, the grace of God. Packer sees that all of humanity stands in an impossible position and has not the means to escape judgment. But, thankfully, a mediator appears who can pay the debt. What makes this story distinctively LDS is what Jeffery R. Holland reminds us of when he wrote,

> Because Christ was willing to mediate for us in the courts of heaven, paying full price for every transgression and thereby meeting the legal demands of justice, he rightly became our new master and could mercifully offer freedom to all who would accept his terms.[115]

The interesting thing about Packard's parable, as Holland points out, is that Jesus' act of paying our debt, while an act of grace, is not a free gift. Jesus essentially refinances our debt, and that debt is only covered if we agree to and live out the new terms he sets for us. Current LDS Apostle Todd Christofferson gives his assent to this understanding of the Atonement and the grace offered

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[114] Boyd K. Packer, "The Mediator," *Ensign* (May 1977): 56. This parable was retold by Packer at a LDS Church Educational System Devotional, Nov. 6th, 2011, in an address given at BYU entitled, *Truths Most Worth Knowing*. This address may be found online at: http://lds.org/broadcasts/archive/ces-devotionals/2011/01?lang=eng; accessed (November 28, 2011). This parable was also quoted from in LDS General Authority LeGrand R. Curtis Jr.'s October 2011 conference message, "Redemption." This talk is printed in *Ensign* (November 2011): 35-37.

[115] Jeffery R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), *230.*

through it in his 2001 *Ensign* article entitled, “Justification and Sanctification.” He says,

> Since the Savior paid for our sins and satisfied justice for us, we become debtors to Him rather than to justice. We must therefore meet the stipulations He has established for forgiveness and cleansing. Otherwise, He withdraws His proffered mediation, and we are left to deal alone with the demands of justice, lacking the means to become pure. One must choose Christ to receive what Christ offers.[116]

Jesus becomes our debtor and to get the grace he offers we must obey his commandments. Because getting the grace Jesus offers is thus a matter of continual obedience, Christofferson concludes that acceptance of the gift of grace is not a single act that occurs at a single moment in time, but is an ongoing process and obligation. Were faith in Christ’s sacrifice enough to have eternal life, one’s salvation could be a single act occurring at a single moment that has an eternal impact. However, under the LDS model, one must spend his/her life repaying the debt to their debtor, and so that person must continually live the commandments of the Lord, lest they be disqualified from grace, that is, default on their debt.

As has been demonstrated thus far, official LDS theology teaches God’s grace opens the door to eternal life, and as such it is necessary but it is not sufficient. To get the full benefit – to get eternal life – we must abandon our sins, obey the commandments, and receive certain ordinances. Faith in Christ is

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[116] Todd Christofferson, “Justification and Sanctification,” *Ensign* (June 2001).

necessary, but not sufficient. Apostle Holland again hammers this point home, saying, “Those who have been born unto God through obedience to the Gospel may by valiant devotion to righteousness obtain exaltation and even reach the status of godhood.”[117] Ultimately, it is not through faith in Christ’s work that one obtains eternal-life (exaltation); rather, it is through one’s own righteousness. To be sure, the LDS church teaches that without Christ’s work, none would be exalted and thus he is necessary. But faith in Christ’s work is not enough. As Kimball states, “However good a person’s works, he could not be saved had Jesus not died for his and everyone else’s sins. And however powerful the saving grace of Christ, it brings exaltation to no man who does not comply with the works of the gospel.”[118] LDS theologian Gerald Lund, expounding his understanding of Paul’s insistence that we are saved by grace alone, teaches, “The atoning power of God unto salvation is a freely available gift from him—but our works of righteousness are essential to bring the gift into power in our lives.”[119] Grace may bring eternal life, but we get the grace we need by our works. Lowell Bennion’s *Introduction to the Gospel*, which was used in the LDS church as the Sunday school curriculum, distilled much of LDS thinking on grace

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[117] Christofferson, “Justification and Sanctification,” 336.

[118] Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 70.

[119] Gerald Lund, “Salvation: By Grace or By Works,” *Ensign* (April 1981): 16-23.

this way, “Man is not saved by grace alone. Neither can he save himself without the grace of Deity.”[120] Eternal life cannot be earned apart from God’s grace, but neither can it be gained by trusting in Christ alone. From the LDS perspective, we are justified, or approved of God and accepted into his presence for eternity, through a combination of grace and works. The LDS Melchizedek Priesthood study guide released by the LDS church paints a good picture of the distinctive LDS view of the relationship of faith and works as they relate to eternal life;

> What is the law of justification? It is simply this: ‘All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations’ (D&C 132:7), in which men must abide to be saved and exalted, must be entered into and performed in righteousness so that the Holy Spirit can justify the candidate for salvation in what has been done…justification is available because of t he atoning sacrifice of Christ, but it becomes operative in the life of an individual only on conditions of personal righteousness.[121]

It is clear that on this LDS soteriological model, turning to Christ in faith is necessary, but not sufficient, for eternal life.

For more quotations from LDS church authorities on repentance, the insufficiency of faith in Christ’s atonement for eternal life, the requirement of

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[120] Lowell L. Bennion, *An Introduction to The Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1959), 146.

[121] *Search These Commandments: Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), 203-204. This passage credits part of this quote to Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 408.

keeping the commandments, and the conditional and unconditional aspects of the atonement, see Appendix 1.

The Neo-Orthodox Challenge

As early as 1967, a discernible movement of LDS theologians began to move away from the traditional synthesis outlined above.[122] These "Neo-Orthodox" LDS theologians reacted against many traditional LDS teachings and tended to emphasize the "otherness" of God, the creaturely dependence upon the creator, the contingency of humankind, and the negative aspects of the fall.[123] Others, possibly sensing the impossibility of earning eternal life under the traditional system and perhaps hoping to relieve LDS member's sense of despair, have published many books and articles attempting to show that eternal life is within reach. They have stressed the individual's inability to merit salvation and the necessity of salvation by grace. Where did this new emphasis come from? BYU professor Robert Millet believes it is the result of at least three factors: 1) The 1970's saw a emphasis on reading and studying the Bible which resulted in

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[122] Carl Mosser, "And the Saints Go Marching On," in *The New Mormon Challenge*, ed. F. Beckwith, C. Mosser, and P. Owen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 77.

[123] O. Kendall White Jr., "The Transformation of Mormon Theology," *Dialogue* 5, no. 2 (1970).

a “re-awakening” to Biblical theology; 2) In the 1980’s and 1990’s, thirteenth President/Prophet Ezra Taft Benson encouraged a discovery of the redemptive theology within the Book of Mormon by asking the LDS church to study the Book of Mormon in a systematic way; 3) Church Authorities (Neil Maxwell and Bruce Hafen) began to speak of grace not as a “final boost,” but as an enabling power that enabled one to accomplish what one could not accomplish on his/her own.[124]

Even with this new emphasis, when one digs deep enough one often finds that the Neo-Orthodox theologians “still work within the context of Mormon metaphysics.”[125] Our attention will now turn to this new movement’s stance on grace in order to assess if we are seeing a real departure from traditional conceptions of grace within the LDS church. To do this we will examine what several influential LDS theologians have said with regard to the four areas covered in the above section.

Conditional vs. Unconditional Atonement

The distinction between conditional and unconditional salvation/atonement is not the focus of much of the Neo-Orthodox theology. This actually tends to

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[124] Millet, Personal Interview, 12/14/2011.

[125] White, 17.

confuse things since, as we have noted, terms like salvation and eternal life can mean different things in different contexts. BYU professor Brad Wilcox recently gave a popular address at BYU entitled, "His Grace is Sufficient."[126] In his speech Dr. Wilcox describes a meeting he had with a student who one day lamented, "I just don't get grace." After asking what the student did not understand, she responded, "I know I need to do my best and then Jesus does the rest, but I can't even do my best." Her response is an honest response one would give based on the LDS understanding of what is required for the fullness of salvation (perfection) and his or her inability to meet that standard. Dr. Wilcox tries to appease her conscience by telling her, "Jesus doesn't make up the difference. Jesus makes all the difference. Grace is not about filling gaps. It's about filling us." By this, Wilcox explains, "Jesus paid our debt in full. He did not pay it all except for a few coins. He paid it all. It is finished." While this sounds very evangelical, what Wilcox is talking about here is not how to gain the fullness of salvation (eternal life), he is talking about how we get the grace we need to be saved in the unconditional/universal sense. He shows us this in his next statement, saying, "We will all be resurrected. We will all go back to God's presence." This, of course, is traditionally what LDS theology has always taught;

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[126] Dr. Wilcox is a professor at BYU, and a member of the LDS Sunday School General Board. This talk was delivered at BYU on July 12th, 2011. Text of the talk may be downloaded from BYU's website at: http://speeches.byu.edu/?act=viewitem&id=1966&tid=2 (accessed November 30, 2011).

every human, in virtue of Jesus death and resurrection, will be resurrected and be re-united with God the Father, even if it is just for judgment.

Wilcox then goes on to say, “What is left to be determined by our obedience is what kind of body we plan on being resurrected with and how comfortable we plan to be in God’s presence and how long we plan to stay there.” What he is showing the student is that LDS grace provides 100% of salvation (resurrection), but each individual’s works determine whether or not you will have the fullness of salvation. To get the gift of eternal life (fullness of salvation), Wilcox reasons, “Christ asks us to show faith in Him, repent, make and keep covenants, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end.”

For Wilcox, eternal life is dependent on one’s ability to make and keep covenants with God. One such covenant is the Baptismal covenant in which one covenants to obey all God’s commandments. If one is able to keep that covenant, then God will keep his end of the bargain and forgive that person’s sins. The problem is, there is no one who can say they have kept up their end of the covenant. This is the problem with which Dr. Wilcox’s student seems to be struggling. That grace one needs to reach eternal life is only activated after one has done all they can do. Dr. Wilcox, because he is not clear with his student, shifts the discussion to what one must do (nothing) to get the grace one needs to be resurrected (salvation). So, while Wilcox is able to sound very “evangelical,” in the end he has the same traditional LDS metaphysics and the same LDS understanding of the operation of grace.

As demonstrated by Wilcox's statement above regarding the need to make and keep covenants with God, Neo-orthodox thinkers tend to speak of meeting the requirements of conditional atonement as living up to covenantal commitments. Robert Millet, a professor at Brigham Young University and one of the revisionist theologians many are looking toward, commented,

> To answer the effects of the Fall, Jesus Christ came to earth to teach the gospel and lead all humankind to the truth. He offered himself as a willing sacrifice, a substitutionary atonement, on our behalf, extended immortality to all of God's Children, and made eternal life available to those who come unto Christ by covenant.[127]

We can see the traditional LDS theology of saving grace here, though it is harder to spot than with many official LDS authorities. Millet talks about immortality being extended to all (unconditional grace given to all) and a conditional grace (eternal life) available to all who "come to Christ by covenant." Speaking of one's responsibility for gaining the fullness of salvation (eternal life) as "coming unto Christ by covenant" is not good news if "coming unto Christ by covenant" is simply a euphemism for keeping all the commandments. This seems to be what Millet seems to have in mind since, in his book, *Life Beyond*, he gives this definition of eternal life, "Immortality, as we have indicated, is a free gift to all. Eternal life, on the other hand, is something for which one must qualify through faithful obedience to the statutes and commandments provided through the plan

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[127] Robert Millet, *Grace Works* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 143.

of salvation."[128] Eternal life is not unconditional, but rather is made available to all because of the atonement. In order to receive the grace of the atonement for individual sin, one must come unto Christ by covenant and qualify through faithful obedience to the statues and commandments.

In his tome on grace, *Grace Works*, Millet reminds us, "The Atonement is that divine act of mercy and grace and condescension by which our Father and God opens the door to reunion."[129] Christ's atonement opens the door to an eternal reunion with our Heavenly Father; however, to walk through the door will require much more than faith. He hints at this later in his book, saying, "All of us have sinned and need to repent to fully pay *our* part of the debt. When we sincerely repent, the Savior's magnificent Atonement pays the *rest* of that debt."[130] Millet here reasons that our obedience does play a part in paying down the debt we owe that keeps us from the fullness of salvation, that is, eternity in communion with our Heavenly Father.

In another work, Millet reminds LDS members,

> The gospel of Jesus Christ is in fact a gospel covenant, a two way [sic] promise. The Lord agrees to do for us what we could never do for

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[128] Robert Millet and Joseph Fielding McConkie, *The Life Beyond* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 132-33.

[129] Ibid., 53.

[130] Ibid., 82.

> ourselves—to forgive our sins, to lift our burdens, to renew our souls and re-create our nature, to raise us from the dead and qualify us for glory hereafter. At the same time, we promise to do what we *can* do; namely, exercise faith in Jesus Christ. Out of that faith will flow repentance, baptism and other ordinances, and faithful obedience.[131]

With the stress on the two-way nature of the covenantal promises, Millet shows the need for the person seeking the graceful forgiveness of the atonement to uphold their end of the bargain. Thus, because of the importance affixed to being faithful to the covenant, Stephen Robinson, another BYU professor many look to as re-engineering the LDS doctrine of grace, said,

> Thus the most important goal in mortality is becoming one with Christ through the gospel covenant and gaining access through that union to his perfection, rather than remaining separate and aloof while trying (fruitlessly!) to generate our own perfection and thereby save ourselves.[132]

Robinson stresses the importance of Christ's grace to perfect us, but knows that for the atonement to do that, we must first become one with Christ through the gospel covenant. Again, even the more blunt LDS theologians of the past agree with Robinson that we cannot perfect ourselves, but instead need to be perfect,

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[131] Robert Millet, *What Happened to the Cross*? (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007), 124. Millet consistently uses the "two way promise" language in his dealings with the topic of grace. See also Millet's *Modern Mormonism*, 69; *Grace works*, 116, *The Mormon Faith: A New Look at Christianity* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, UT, 1998), 69. He also speaks of "remaining in covenant," thus upholding his covenantal promises in *Within Reach* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 50; and *Are We There Yet: Don't Give Up. You're Closer Than You Think* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 90.

[132] Stephen Robinson, *Believing Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 14.

"in Christ."[133] What Robinson does is change the emphasis from personal obedience to personal covenant making and keeping. If, as with Millet and Wilcox, "covenant keeping" is a euphemism for "keeping the commandments," his view of justifying grace is no closer to traditional Christianity than the institutional LDS conception.

It would appear the Neo-Orthodox theologians choose to emphasize the covenantal aspects of the atonement, but the traditional LDS metaphysics of the atonement are still there. This is not a one-way covenant such as the one the LORD made with Abraham. The LDS covenant is a two-way covenant made between humans and God and thus, at its best, eternal life is a salvation partnership.[134] An important question to ponder becomes, how do I enter into, and stay faithful to, that covenant, so that I will receive the forgiveness I need? To answer that question we will look to the remaining three sections.

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[133] Moroni 10:32; 2 Nephi 25:23

[134] Spencer Kimball calls eternal life a "cooperative program," and says that it is the overall responsibility of man to cooperate fully with the Eternal God in accomplishing eternal life. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 2.

The Insufficiency of Christ's Sacrifice for Eternal Life

If turning to Jesus and trusting in his work for us is not enough to secure a place in eternal life, we can say that faith in his sacrifice is not sufficient for eternal life. That is the position of traditional LDS theology, as seen above. Robert Millet turns the conversation on its head, reacting to some who feel they can merit eternal life by their works alone;

> The Book of Mormon teaches that we are saved by merit, but not by our own merit. '*Since man had fallen,'* Aaron explained to the father of Lamoni, '*he could not merit anything of himself;* but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth' (Alma 22:14; emphasis added by author). This passage may require a bit of explanation. Of course we are expected to receive the ordinances of salvation, work faithfully in the kingdom, perform acts of Christian service, and endure faithfully to the end. Of course we are required to do the works of righteousness. They are *necessary* because they evidence our covenant with Christ to follow him and keep his commandments, but they are not *sufficient*.[135]

We can see here that Millet chooses to stress the insufficiency of humans works for eternal life, yet he also speaks of their necessity, which would mean faith in Christ's work for eternal life is also insufficient on its own.

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[135] Robert Millet, *What Happened to the Cross?,* 116. Millet also speaks of works as a necessary and insufficient condition of our ultimate salvation in *Grace Works*, 116; *Modern Mormonism*, 70; *Bridging the Divide*, 51; *The Mormon Faith*, 77.

Stephen Robinson seems to be in agreement with Millet here, saying, "grace does not mean that we are saved by grace alone, that is, without participating in the process in some degree, nor does it mean that salvation is totally without conditions."[136] In fact, Robinson points out, "An oath can be one-sided, but a covenant must contain mutual obligation—'If you will do A, I will do B."[137] He goes on to say, "In the gospel covenant, we exchange the burden of sin for the obligation to love him and each other and to do the very best we can."[138] Another Neo-Orthodox theologian states, "No one will *ever* be exalted by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, if that person is complacent in his approach to the commandments. Nor will anyone find himself exalted solely through seeking to keep all of the commandments of Christ, as *no one* is able to *fully do so*."[139] What these theologians have in common is an emphasis on the idea that one cannot do enough to merit the fullness of salvation apart from Christ. One's merit may be a piece of the puzzle, but it cannot, by itself, earn eternal life. At times, this emphasis can lead one to think Neo-Orthodox LDS theologians agree with the traditional Christian formulation that eternal life is given as pure grace,

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[136] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 68.

[137] Ibid., 36.

[138] Ibid., 44.

[139] Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Odds Are, You're Going to be Exalted* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 2.

meaning one can never do *enough* to merit it. However, in concert with institutional LDS theology and unlike traditional Christian theology, in order to qualify for that grace, one must keep up his/her end of the covenant. Thus, like in traditional LDS theology, faith in Christ is not sufficient for eternal life.[140]

Though Robert Millet and others use terms like "unmerited" with regards to eternal life, Millet also confesses that he does not embrace protestant thinking with regard to the relationship of grace and works.[141] Neo-Orthodox theologians tend to soften this blow by stressing that no human can work enough to merit eternal life outside of the covenant. These theologians emphasize humanity's absolute dependence on the grace of Christ, yet that the grace that brings eternal life is still only activated when one is faithful to his/her covenantal commitments.

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[140] In some respects, Neo-Orthodox LDS theologians sound more like Catholics in that they speak of the ordinances as the means by which we receive the remission of sins. While this in itself is troubling, the researcher believes that the LDS theology of works goes much deeper. In fact, while the ordinances are said to give the remission of sins and are thought to be the natural fruit of real faith, so a life of good works is seen in the same light such that works become almost a sacrament, an responsive means of receiving the grace one needs. This is problematic because just as one who only goes through part of the baptism process is not baptized and thus his/her sins are not forgiven, so the person who just completes most of the good works they are able to may not demonstrate a true saving faith. For a more or less sacramental view of baptism and its efficacy for obtaining the grace of forgiveness, see Robert Millet, "The Doctrine of the New Birth," *Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies*, Transcript (MIL-T3) of a video lecture given at the Portland Institute of Religion, 1994.

[141] Millet, *Grace Works*, 117.

Millet, speaking of what is required to be forgiven of one's sins, has said, "Though all salvation is made possible through the mercy and love of Christ, Mormons believe there are certain things individuals must do for divine grace to be fully activated in their lives."[142] Millet's works testify that Jesus has gracefully done much for us, yet faith in his work is ultimately insufficient for eternal life for each human must also keep up their end of the two way covenantal commitment. For Millet, this includes promising to "accept Christ as [one's] Savior, be faithful to [one's] covenants, obey his commandments and endure to the end."[143] Millet does not describe obedience as meriting eternal life. Rather, he thinks obedience and ordinance observance is the way in which one receives atonement by faith. Thus, for Millet, doing temple work is not meritorious, yet it is a necessary act one must do to complete the faith package. One problem Millet faces is that to do temple work, one must pass the Temple Worthiness interview where one pledges to keep the commandments. If one does not, he is asked to take time to truly repent and put things in order before being issued a temple recommendation.[144] This means that before one can complete the required work for exaltation, one must be deemed worthy to do so, meaning the person will

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[142] Robert Millet and Noel B. Reynolds, *Latter-Day Christianity: 10 Basic Issues* (Provo: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 36.

[143] Ibid.

[144] *Preparing to Enter The Holy Temple* (Canada: Intellectual Reserve, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 2002), 4.

have sanctified him/herself. Of course they will see this sanctification as a result of grace and a work of the Spirit, but the fact remains that eternal life is for the already sanctified, the already obedient. It is a grace made available to those who are out of their sins.[145]

Up to this point, then, we have seen the Neo-Orthodox theologians have maintained the traditional LDS metaphysics with regard grace, though the researcher believes that several BYU scholars see themselves as helping their faith tradition move away from a work's righteousness mindset. In fact, perhaps due to the new emphasis on humanity's inability to earn eternal life apart from God's grace, Bruce Hafen, an LDS General Authority, recently spoke to the LDS members, saying that those who "think our church is moving toward an understanding of the relationship between grace and works that draws on Protestant teachings" are mistaken.[146] While the researcher hopes and prays he is wrong, there is no indication in the official publications or public addresses that this assessment is incorrect.

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[145] Alma 11:37

[146] Bruce Hafen, "The Atonement: All for All," *Ensign* (May 2004): 94. Quoted in Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson, "Bridge or the Beehive," in *The Christian Research Journal* 30, no. 4 (2007): 27.

Continual Keeping of the Lord's Commands

Stephen Robinson admits, "If we insist on fine points, '*keeping* the commandments' means not breaking them—not any of them, not ever."[147] He also admits that nobody actually does this and, in fact, thinks that no one *can* do everything the law demands.[148] Thus Robinson tries to lessen the tension by claiming, "the real bottom line is being committed to the proper goals, and doing all we can to achieve them."[149] However, if one was to take the time to see if they were completely committed to the proper goals and doing all one could to achieve them, that person would have to admit they were not. This demand is not really any less burdensome or impossible than the expectation that one obey all the commandments. However, Robinson takes LDS members to task who think they need to keep the commandments perfectly, even though the reason many LDS members believe that is because, as we have seen above, authorities in the LDS church have been telling their followers that they must keep all the

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[147] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 46.

[148] Ibid., 48. This is interesting because The Book of Mormon clearly states, "for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of man, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). Further, Spencer Kimball said, "While changing one's life from evil to good is admittedly not easy, we cannot emphasize too strongly that every person endowed with normal faculties can do it." See Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 175.

[149] Ibid., 46.

commandments all of the time for the past 180 years. Rather than heed the LDS church's call to keep all of the commandments, Robinson believes the atonement can connect imperfect people to eternal life based on faith in Jesus and repentance, provided that they endure in the covenant till the end. Part of remaining in that covenant is being committed to doing all that one can do to keep the commands of God.[150] Millet seems to agree, saying, "For us to enjoy the strength, enabling power, and purifying influence of the mighty arm of God, we must do all in our power to receive it."[151]

One might naturally ask Millet and Robinson, What is all we can do? That is, what commands must be kept? How many is enough to be considered all we could do? Both Millet and Robinson attempt to neutralize the force of 2 Nephi 25:23, which reads, "For it is by grace we are saved, after all we can do." The traditional understanding of that verse means one must really do all that he/she can before grace can do the saving it needs to do. In the same way that a parent may tell their child, "you may enjoy the ice cream I bought for you after you eat your vegetables," so, it is by grace we are saved after all that we can do. In the example, the child does not receive the ice cream until they have eaten all the vegetables. Likewise, the institutional LDS understanding of 2 Nephi 25:23 is

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[150] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 47-49.

[151] Millet, *What Happened to the Cross?*, 128.

that one must literally do everything they are capable of doing if they are to receive God's grace that will bring him/her eternal life. In a special issue of Ensign aimed at new converts, "the peculiar" LDS doctrine of atonement is discussed and 2 Nephi 25:23 is wedded to Moroni 10:32 in order to highlight the personal responsibility each individual has to be forgiven. These verses are said to communicate "the perfect relationship between the atoning grace of Christ and the obedient efforts of mankind."[152] If we are "saved by grace after all we can do," we ought to be very concerned with what all we can do is. If one was to ask LDS church authorities what "all you can do" means, it would likely be something akin to what Prophet/President Heber Grant is recorded as saying, alluding to 1 Nephi 3:7;

> We ourselves are able to perform every duty and obligation that God has required of men. No commandment was ever given to us but that God has given us the power to keep that commandment. If we fail, we, and we alone, are responsible for the failure, because God endows His servants, from the President of the Church down to the humblest member, with all the ability, all the knowledge, all the power that is necessary, faithfully, diligently, and properly to discharge every duty and every obligation that rests upon them, and we, and we alone, will have to answer if we fail in this regard.[153]

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[152] Clyde J. Williams, "Plain and Precious Truths Restored," *Ensign* (October 2006): 53.

[153] See also Joseph F. Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, pg. 336-337; George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 16, pg. 140-141; Lorenzo Snow, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 20, pg. 187-188; Marion G. Romney, "Living Welfare Principles," *Ensign* (November 1981): 92.

Seeing that the traditional view lends itself only to despair, the Neo-Orthodox have pushed for a new understanding of "after all we can do." LDS Neo-Orthodox theologian Alonzo Gaskill says,

> Too often we misinterpret this [2 Ne 25:23] to mean that we have to do everything possible – everything within our power – and *then* God's grace will kick in. Many see Nephi's words as a caution, rather than a promise – as though Nephi is saying you do the impossible, and then – and only then – go talk to God about offering you a little help. If that is really what Nephi means, then Jesus will be the only saved being, as He is the only one who has done *all* He possibly could.[154]

Stephen Robinson adds that if grace were able to operate only in such cases, no one would ever be able to be saved, not even the most righteous among us. Neo-Orthodox thinkers have certainly nailed the problem with the traditional view, as taught by the LDS prophets, apostles and general authorities. Their response is to seek a fresh interpretation of this passage. Robert Millet reasons that "after" does not mean we are not saved *until* we have done all we can do. Rather, he opines, "I am persuaded that the phrase, 'after all we can do' means above and beyond all we can do, notwithstanding all we can do, in spite of all we can do, it is by the grace of God we are saved."[155] Robinson holds a similar view. He wrote,

> Actually, I understand the preposition 'after' in 2 Nephi 25:23 to be a preposition of separation rather than a preposition of time. It denotes logical separateness rather than temporal sequence. We are saved by

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[154] Gaskill, 6. Italics original, brackets mine.

[155] Gregory Johnson and Robert Millet, *Bridging the Divide* (New York: Monkfish Book Publishing, Company, 2007), 51.

> grace 'apart from all we can do,' or 'all we can do notwithstanding,' or even 'regardless of all we can do.'[156]

While this interpretation certainly eases the burden of keeping all the commands all the time, is it a correct interpretation? Not being an LDS authority personally, the researcher is probably not the best person to judge if the Neo-Orthodox interpretation is correct; however, in looking at the last 60 years of General Conference usages of that verse, it becomes clear that Millet and Robinson are not in harmony with how LDS Prophets, Apostles, and General Authorities have viewed that verse. The hope is that this departure is a genuine movement away from the institutional understanding of how grace is activated in one's life. While this is not traditional Christianity, any movement in that direction is welcomed and ought to be encouraged. To see the contrast with "official" LDS interpretations of this verse, consider that in 2004, General Authority Bruce C. Hafen quoted 2 Nephi 25:23, saying, "If we must give all that we have, then our giving only *almost* everything is not enough. If we *almost* keep the commandments, we *almost* receive the blessings."[157]

Similarly, in 1998, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks connected "doing all we can do" with "denying all ungodliness";

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[156] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 92.

[157] Bruce C. Hafen, "The Atonement: All for all," *Ensign* (May 2004): 97. Italics original.

> And what is 'all we can do?' It surely includes repentance and baptism, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. Moroni pleaded, "Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and God with al your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ.[158]

Apostle Gene R. Cook adds,

> Works alone cannot bring that divine gift, but they are a key condition upon which the gift is received. (See 2 Ne. 10:23–25.) "For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (2 Ne. 25:23.) Thus, unless one has done all in his own power, he cannot expect the grace of God to be manifest.[159]

Marion G. Romney concurs, saying,

> Salvation is an individual matter. There will be no mass salvation. Some have mistakenly concluded from Paul's statement—"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works" (Eph. 2:8–9)—some have erroneously concluded from this statement that works are not necessary. The truth was spoken by Nephi when he said, "We are saved [by grace], after all we can do" (2 Ne. 25:23). It will require maximum effort for us to bring ourselves within the reach of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ so that we can be saved.[160]

> Theodore Burton expressed the same sentiment at General Conference.

After quoting 2 Nephi 25:23, he gave this interpretation;

> Exaltation comes as a gift from God, dependent upon my obedience to God's law. No works I do solely of my own power can bring this to pass. Only by the grace of God has this course been opened to me, but only

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[158] Dallin H. Oaks, "Have You Been Saved," *Ensign* (May 1998): 55.

[159] Gene R. Cook, "Receiving Divine Assistance through the Grace of the Lord," *Ensign* (May 1993): 79.

[160] Marion G. Romney, "Fundamental Welfare Services," *Ensign* (May 1979): 94.

> through obedience to the laws of God can I claim my inheritance in the celestial kingdom of my Heavenly Father as a son within his family. I cannot be exalted in my sins, but must work until I overcome them.[161]

More recently, current LDS Apostle D. Todd Christofferson said, "It would mock the Savior's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross for us to expect that He should transform us into angelic beings with no real effort on our part. Rather, we seek His grace to complement and reward our most diligent efforts (see 2 Nephi 25:23)."[162] *Contra*, and perhaps correcting, the Neo-Orthodox theologians, Christofferson sees 2 Nephi 25:23 as commending our most diligent efforts. For him, this verse is not a statement about God's grace coming to our rescue "apart from all we can do." Instead it describes the partnership. Our best effort is required, and until we do all we can do God's grace is not ours for the taking.

Rather than filling the next several pages with quotes from other LDS church leaders offering their interpretation of this verse, the interested reader will be referred to a more expansive list of quotations from General Conferences that can be found in Appendix 2. What we find is a consistent voice calling for the individual believer to do all they can do before God's grace becomes effective. This means keeping the commandments and certainly true repentance. Neo-

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[161] Theodore M. Burton, "Salvation and Exaltation," *Ensign* (July 1972): 78.

[162] D. Todd Christofferson, "The Divine Gift of Repentance," Ensign (November 2011): 39.

Orthodox thinkers seem to understand the problem with asking for perfection before obtaining forgiveness and are reinterpreting their scriptures in light of that problem. Millet believes that his and Robinson's interpretation of 2 Nephi 25:23 represents the transition of a faith community from a works-righteousness mindset to a more grace-based mindset.[163] However, this can only be done at the cost of labeling virtually every Apostle and Prophet and General Authority of the LDS church a poor and errant interpreter of scripture. To date, no Neo-Orthodox theologian has openly or publically confronted any General Authority on the necessity of actually forsaking all sin and living all the commandments to attain eternal life. Nor will they likely ever outright condemn any teaching of the church. Rather, their methodology for change seems to be to change from within by neglecting the older interpretations and hoping to influence a new crop of leaders who will carry their teachings in an authoritative way to the masses.[164]

True Repentance

BYU professor Camille Fronk reminds LDS members that their role in forgiveness is not a passive one. She says, "Through the process of repenting, including confessing and forsaking our sins, we do our part to become pure and

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[163] Robert Millet, Personal Interview, 12/14/2011.

[164] Ibid.

receptive in the hands of the potter."[165] LDS Neo-Orthodox theologians do not deny the necessity of repentance, yet this is another area many are pushing for a fresh interpretation. When reading these authors and theologians, one is likely to stumble upon quotes from Christian authors and theologians such as C.S. Lewis, John MacArthur, N.T. Wright, Max Lucado, and Phillip Yancey. Perhaps taking queues from such men, Neo-Orthodox LDS thinkers are more comfortable speaking of repentance as "progression and improvement and growth and maturity and refinement."[166] Stephen Robinson defines repentance as "an ongoing process of repudiating our mistakes and trying again."[167] LDS Leaders have also spoken of repentance as a process. LDS Apostle Neil L. Anderson recently spoke of repentance, saying,

> If you are striving and working to repent, you are in the process of repenting… As we honestly confess our sins, restore what we can to the offended, and forsake our sins by keeping the commandments, we are in the process of receiving forgiveness.[168]

The problem with the process is that one does not obtain the goods until the process is complete. Just as removing clothes from the dryer before the dryer is

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[165] Camille Fronk, *In the Hands of the Potter* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 40.

[166] Millet, *What Happened to the Cross?,* 129.

[167] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 47.

[168] Neil L. Anderson, "Repent…That I May Heal You," *Ensign* (November 2009): 41-42.

finished will result in having wet clothes, so a person in the process of repenting is not yet fully repentant. Clothes in the dryer are in the process of getting dry (but they are not yet), and people in the repentance process are in the process of receiving forgiveness (but they do not have it yet). As Spencer Kimball so aptly put it, "incomplete repentance never brought compete forgiveness."[169]

Robert Millet writes off many of the harsh sounding statements of past leaders as "revivalist rhetoric" spoken during periods of "Mormon Reformation" when LDS church leadership was "striving to 'raise the bar' in terms of obedience and faithfulness."[170] While this may be true in some cases, if the leaders thought that what they were communicating was true – that it corresponded to reality – then it cannot be disassociated from LDS theology. Further, the "raising of the bar" does not seem to be isolated to any particular period and, as Appendix 1 and 2 demonstrate, that teaching is part of the consistent teaching of the LDS church from Joseph Smith's day to the present. It seems like the kind of thing that has "sticking power" in the church.[171]

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[169] Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 212.

[170] Millet and Johnson, *Bridging the Divide*, 62.

[171] Ibid., 141-42. Millet argues that true doctrine has "sticking power"—it is taught and discussed and perpetuated over time, and with the passing of years seems to take on greater significance. Interestingly, Millet uses the doctrine of the proper relationship between the grace of God and the good works of man to be a particularly good example of such a doctrine. In his introduction to his 2010 book, *Modern Mormonism*, Millet, while not fully saying the LDS church is

Speaking at General Conference in 2007, Claudio D. Zivic (General Authority) said,

> Nephi taught us clearly what we ought to do. He said, 'for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23). I believe that the first thing we have to keep in mind in doing 'all we can' is to repent of our sins. We will never be able to reach our divine potential if we remain in our sins.[172]

Zivic ties many themes together for us with this quote. Doing "all that we can" means repenting, which means not remaining in sin. While in latent agreement with this understanding, some Neo-Orthodox LDS theologians have begun pushing to reinterpret the time frame in which moral perfection needs to be reached. Robinson says, "When have I done enough? Never in this life. Since the goal is perfection, the Lord can never unconditionally approve an imperfect performance. No matter how much we do in mortality, no matter how well we

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changing its doctrine, he does confess that "without question" the LDS church is emphasizing new things. In his section of the nature of God in that chapter, he stresses that the Church does not emphasize that God is an exalted man, and thus, it is unfair to label that LDS theology. Further, in the appendix to his book with Greg Johnson, *Bridging the Divide*, Millet argues that the correct parameters for LDS theology are set by what the church teaches now. While it seems his desire is to distance himself from some of the teachings of past Prophets, the problem with this is that in Millet's own works he often quotes from sermons of Brigham Young out of the Journal of Discourses, *The Lectures on Faith,* and the writings of many old Apostles (like Bruce McConkie and Orson and Parley Pratt, etc.) and Prophets (like Joseph F. Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, Spencer Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, etc.). It seems like he wants to have it both ways, in that he wants to shame Christians digging up embarrassing statements of earlier LDS Prophets and Apostles, but when it suits him he is free to draw from those sources.

[172] Claudio D. Zivic, "After all We Can Do," *Ensign* (November 2007): 98.

perform, the demand to do better, the pressure to improve and to make progress, will never go away."[173]

The problem with punting one's responsibilities to repent or be perfect to the afterlife is that it: A) goes directly against the teachings of The Book of Mormon; B) goes directly against LDS authority's teachings; C) goes directly against official LDS church publications. The Book of Mormon, in no unclear language, says, "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors."[174]

Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland communicates this very idea in his book, *Christ and the New Covenant*. In that tome he emphasizes that this life is the probationary period and that within this probationary period "there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became *a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God…"*[175] The Book of Mormon Prophet Alma goes on to preach, "do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the

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[173] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 93.

[174] Alma 34:32

[175] Holland, 208-209.

night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed."[176] LDS Apostle Neil L. Anderson comments, "The scriptures warn us, 'Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance.' But in this life, it is never too late to repent."[177] Here Anderson intimates that while it is never too late in this life, after this life it is too late. The LDS manual *Gospel Principles* shares this view, saying, "The prophets have declared that 'this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God' (Alma 34:32)."[178]

LDS Neo-Orthodox theologians often seek also to minimize the distinctive LDS emphasis on the forsaking of sin. Instead, they talk more often of being in process or moving in a covenant keeping direction.[179] Other Neo-Orthodox theologians speak much more of being in covenant. Stephen Robinson says, "Neither 'enduring; nor 'being faithful' means being perfect or living from our baptism until our death without sinning, for God has anticipated our weakness and has prepared the sacrament as a means of ongoing repentance and improvement *within* the covenant."[180] For Robinson, works do not get us in the

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[176] Alma 34:33

[177] Anderson, 43.

[178] *Gospel Principles* (2009 ed.), 113.

[179] Millet, Personal Interview.

[180] Robinson, *Following Christ, 65-66.*

kingdom (that is by grace). So why does he think one ought to work? Robinson says he does not work to be "saved," he works to be exalted, to become what Christ is.[181] Robinson thinks this gives him a leg up on traditional Christian theologians who, in his view, have no reason to work if they have already been saved.[182] The researcher has long felt that if when we remove the fear of punishment or promise of reward we lose all motivation to do good works, it shows that the only reason we were doing good works was out of fear, or to get something for ourselves, but never out of love. The Christian who sees faith in Jesus' work as fully sufficient for eternal life is freed to love God with his/her life through his/her actions. Rather than using God to get what one ultimately wants, God's justifying grace frees one to see that God is the great reward. It seems that any person who works for eternal life will, more naturally, do good works out of self-love ultimately, and not out of love for God.

Robinson's conception of justifying grace is not radically different from the institutional understanding of salvation and eternal life. He believes that he is saved by grace and is thus part of God's kingdom, but that through his works he can attain eternal life. This is no different than LDS authorities who teach that the atonement has an unconditional and conditional aspect. What Robinson does is

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[181] Robinson, *Following Christ,* 68.

[182] Ibid., 69. Robinson does later acknowledge worship of God as a valid reason to do good works.

soften what is required for the conditional aspects of the atonement to be received, and he does this in a way reminiscent of the "covenantal nomism" of some first-century Jews.[183] In fact, he says,

> We are bound to the new covenant in much the same way the children of Israel were bound to the old. When the blood of Christ was shed, the new contract between God and human beings, the gospel covenant, became valid and binding for all those who have agreed to its terms. When human beings keep their covenants, when they abide by the conditions of their agreements with God, they are said to be justified.[184]

One way some Neo-Orthodox theologians minimize the need for perfect repentance is by highlighting Christ's role in perfecting us. Robert Millet is even comfortable speaking of the imputation of God's righteousness, and sees this as essentially what it means to be perfected in Christ (Moroni 10:32).[185] Millet does not talk about what the first part of Moroni 10:32 means, in which the conditions for being perfected are given, namely, denying yourself of *all* ungodliness.

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[183] Robinson's view has the two hallmarks of "covenantal nomism:" 1) one gets in to the covenant in an act of God's grace, 2) One remains part of God's covenantal community by obeying the laws and ordinances required of them. On Robinson's view, one remains part of God's covenantal people even when transgressions are evident because of the internal mechanism of the Lord's Supper, which weekly renews one's commitment to repent. Thus, ultimately, salvation is by grace, and works are the condition of remaining "in-covenant." While helping alleviate the stress of trying to be perfect, this view, if a legitimate expression of LDS thought, would be a departure from the gospel as Paul preached, since Paul preached the gospel to convert people away from an essentially "covenantal nomistic" viewpoint, and to see Jesus' sacrifice as sufficient for one's righteous status.

[184] Ibid., 37.

[185] Millet, *Are We There Yet?*, 125.

While he does not always make it clear, even Millet professes that remaining in that covenant means more than maintaining faith in the work of Christ. Indeed, Millet, while maintaining salvation is in Christ, tells his readers, "if we qualify to enter the house of the Lord, we qualify for life in paradise after death and the celestial Kingdom after the resurrection."[186] Qualifying to enter the temple is a matter of personal worthiness.[187] *Gospel Principles* states this point clearly, saying, "[Jesus] did His part to help us return to our heavenly home. It is now up to each of us to do our part and become worthy of exaltation."[188]

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[186] Millet, *Are We There Yet*, 82.

[187] Former LDS members say that prior to going to the temple one must pass an examination by church authorities. In this examination they are asked questions, one of which is something like, "Do you associate with apostates?" What is strange is that Jesus himself, the friend of sinners, could not pass this "worthiness" test, and would not be allowed in the LDS temple. For questions asked to obtain a temple recommend, see also *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, (Canada: Intellectual Reserve, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Canada, 2002), 4.

[188] *Gospel Principles* (2009 ed.), 16. Aaron Shafovaloff (staff member at Mormonism Research Ministries) has examined changes in *Gospel Principles* over the years. It was first introduced in 1978 and has been republished nine times, most recently in 2009. He reports, "The manual has been standard curriculum for the Gospel Essentials Sunday school class (for investigators and new converts), but for 2010 and 2011 it serves also as the curriculum for the Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society classes twice a month." This manual gives the reader an introduction to LDS theology in a basically systematic way, presenting a "sweeping worldview meta-narrative to understand ultimate realty and their grand purpose in life." What Shafovaloff has noticed is that in the early 90's (1992 ed.), some of the perfectionism and talk of "earning" our final destination was removed. For example, page 289 of the 1988 edition spoke of being "assigned to the place we had earned for our eternal home," while the 1992 edition (pg. 301) changed this to read, "the place for which we had prepared."

Speaking of being "temple worthy" seems again to be a euphemistic way to smuggle in the notion of qualifying one's self, rather than trusting in Jesus to qualify one, for eternal life. Traditional Christianity looks at faith in Christ as a clear indication that one has eternal life[189] rather than a temple recommend.

Further, Millet, in a stroke of un-clarity, tells us that all it takes to remain in God's covenant, and thus receive the benefits of the covenant, is to be "constant and dependable."[190] If by that he means what his church leaders have consistently taught, then he is not saying anything noteworthy. If, however, he is saying something new, it would sure help if he would define what the terms of the

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Interestingly, Shafovaloff reports the 2009 edition has a persistent and clear presentation of the need to prove one's self worthy for exaltation. This perfectionist tone is heightened by a newly adopted quote from Brigham Young, itself taken from the LDS church's publication, *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young*, 293. This quote stresses the need for honesty in every act of one's life to be considered worthy of eternal life. What we may glean from this is that though the LDS church has from time to time toned down its perfectionist rhetoric, it has, nonetheless, maintained that teaching. That is, while the 1992 ed. took the word "earned" out of the manual, the teaching is still there, but with a new phrase, "place for which we have prepared." While over the years there is an ebb and flow to the perfectionist rhetoric, the teaching is constant. For Shafovaloff's full examination of changes in the *Gospel Principles* manual, see his article "Gospel Principles 2009 as a Significant Perpetuation of Traditional Mormon Theology." The article can be found at: http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no115.htm#gp (accessed November 29, 2011).

[189] 1 John 5:11-13

[190] Millet, *Are We There Yet?*, 124.

covenant are in a way that would allow us to see his theological departure from the LDS church teachings.

Robinson confesses that the "Latter-day Saints doctrine of grace does not mean that we are saved by grace *alone*, that is, without participating in the process in some degree, nor does it mean that salvation is without conditions."[191] Jesus' death is necessary, and by entering the covenant though faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, we are made perfect, provided that we continue in the covenant relationship (endure to the end).[192] While Robinson admits perfection is the goal, he is realistic that this goal cannot be achieved in this life, an idea shared by some LDS authorities.[193] However, Orthodox authorities, while they do not imagine they will become equal in power, might, and dominion with God in this life (the full meaning of perfection), they do stress that one must be perfect in "this sphere." Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith said,

> Saints are to keep themselves clean morally, spiritually and physically, by a proper observance of the laws given them. Thus, they would become sanctified so that they might dwell in the presence of the Lord.

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[191] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 68.

[192] Ibid., 47-49.

[193] Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 8-12.

> If we are able to do all of this, surely we could be considered perfect in kingdom.[194]

Sanctifying oneself is what enables one to dwell in the presence of the Lord where one may continue to progress. Smith makes this explicit when he says, "To enter the *celestial* and obtain exaltation it is necessary that the *whole law be kept*."[195] He says, "to be sanctified there are certain definite covenants we must keep in faithfulness…that by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins."[196] While Robinson downplays our ability to do what Smith believes is required for one to be "entitled" to the kingdom (keep the whole law),[197] he does carve out a space for our works by suggesting, "if we are doing what can reasonably be expected of a loyal disciple in our present circumstances, then we can have faith that our offering is accepted through the grace of God."[198]

Robinson, while recognizing our inability to be perfect in our sphere, maintains that saving grace is a cooperative effort, and thus, Jesus' work for salvation is insufficient. He claims, "In my case, my efforts might take me twenty

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[194] Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 12.

[195] Ibid., 206.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Ibid., 207.

[198] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 94.

percent of the way to perfection, your efforts might take you fifty percent—or two percent—of the way. The Savior *still* covers the difference. But in every case the sum of the joint effort is the same—anyone's best effort, however great or small, plus the atonement of Christ will equal 100% of what is needed to enter God's kingdom."[199]

In his popular book, *Believing Christ*, Robinson illustrates this understanding by retelling an incident in his family's life that he turned into a parable for the kingdom of God. His daughter wanted a bicycle and he advised her, "You save all your pennies, and pretty soon you'll have enough for a bike."[200] After a few weeks, his daughter Sarah brought him a jar of pennies, saying, "You promised that if I saved all my pennies, pretty soon I'd have enough to get a bike. And Daddy, I've saved every single one." While he had not lied to her (if she did save every single penny she would someday have enough money to buy the bike), she did not have enough yet, but she had done everything she could to follow her daddy's instructions. So, he took Sarah to the bicycle shop, and after she realized her pennies were not enough, he told her, "You give me everything

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[199] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 97.

[200] Ibid., 131.

you've got, the whole sixty-one cents, and a hug and a kiss, and the bike is yours."[201]

What Robinson gleans from this incident is that God's kingdom is impossible to gain on our own, and thus, God's grace is necessary. He believes that as one trusts in God's grace to make up the difference, he/she can be justified. Robinson hears Jesus whisper to us all, "perfection is still the ultimate goal, but until you can get it on your own, I'll let you use mine."[202] It is clear that Jesus does not pay for the bike without our investment, and so, his work on our behalf is not fully sufficient. If a traditional Christian was telling the story, he might say that God promises the bike to him and he trusts him completely. When the child sees how much her father sacrifices to get the bike for her, she longs to show her gratitude for the purchase. The difference is that getting the "bike" for the traditional Christian is not a joint effort, while for Robinson it is. Robinson's view is ultimately an example of what some traditional Christians have called the "Jesus Plus" program. Jesus' work, plus your work, circumcision, or something else, will save you. This program is foreign to the biblical gospel of salvation by grace alone.

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[201] Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 32.

[202] Ibid., 33.

Robinson's parable is different from Apostle Packard's parable of "The Mediator," in that Stephen Robinson's parable does not emphasize that we are now indebted to God, meaning we must continue the rest of our lives to abide by his rules otherwise we default on the loan and do not get the bike/kingdom. It is unsure know what Robinson makes of current President Packard's parable, but Robinson does follow the trend among Neo-Orthodox theologians to downplay the necessity to "keep all the commandments all the time" in order to remain in the covenant.[203] Because of this, Robinson's parable is a step in the right direction. While his view is not equivalent to traditional Christianity's view of grace, were it to become embraced officially, it would represent a modest revolution in thinking in the LDS church.

What is clear is that both Packard's and Robinson's parables for the kingdom are substantially different from the parable of the prodigal son that Jesus tells regarding the kingdom. In Jesus' parable, the returning son is not asked to repay the debt in full or in part. That is, the son does not combine his "little" with the father's "lot" to get into the banquet; the father pays it all. Nor does his father's generosity indebt the son to himself. The younger son is a full son (fully justified), and this status is given fully by grace.

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[203] Robinson does recognize the problems inherent in putting sanctification as a requirement for justifying grace; no one would ever be worthy of the grace they need to be justified, insisting that we save ourselves before the Savior can save us. See Ibid., 89.

Summary

It appears, then, that some in the LDS Neo-Orthodox movement depart from institutional LDS thinking in at least two ways: 1) The necessity of keeping all the commandments and 2) The complete forsaking of sin. However, They still maintain traditional LDS metaphysics as it pertains to the insufficiency of faith in Christ for eternal life and in the dual nature of the atonement.

The problem is that in order to depart from the traditional LDS understanding of "keeping the commandments," and the definition of repentance, which involves abandonment/forsaking of all sin, one must forego sustaining the authorities of the LDS church as one would have to reject their teaching and leading of the church in these areas as outlined above. Oddly enough, this would also mean that those same Prophets, Apostles and other authorities would consider them outside the LDS church and certainly in need of repentance.[204]

Some recent Evangelicals claim to have discerned a Neo-Orthodox influence in "some important LDS General Authorities."[205] The researcher is not

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[204] Remember Spencer Kimball's elaboration on the definition of repentance, "That transgressor is not fully repentant who… does not sustain the authorities of the Church." See Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 203.

[205] Mosser, 82.

in a privileged position to know what is talked about behind closed doors, but one of the only examples of this influence that is actually cited is Apostle Dallin H. Oaks' April 1998 conference message entitled, "Have You Been Saved?"[206] While it may be true that Oaks borrows several phrases from Stephen Robinson's book, *Following Christ*, all of the hallmarks of the distinctive institutional LDS view of justification/atonement/grace are present. Oaks speaks candidly of the unconditional and conditional nature of the atonement,[207] the

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[206] Mosser also gives Dallin Oaks' message given at BYU, and published in the Ensign, "Another Testament of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, March 1994, as an example of the Neo Orthodox movement's influence on general authorities. In that talk, Oaks does recognize the contribution of BYU professors such as Millet and Robinson, even calling their works "inspired." Yet he concludes by quoting Moroni 10:32, showing his reliance on the institutional ideas of repentance and meriting eternal life through obedience to the commandments. He applauds the new attention the Atonement is getting, yet continues to hold a hard line on the need for our works to supplement Christ's atonement if we are to receive God's grace needed to obtain the fullness of salvation. For Example, in his February 26th, 2010 address to the faculty and students of Harvard Law School, Oaks said, "We were placed on earth to acquire a physical body and – through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and by obedience to the laws and ordinance of His gospel – to qualify for the glorified celestial condition and relationships that are called exaltation or eternal life." This talk was published recently, see, Dallin H. Oaks, "Fundamental to Our Faith," *Ensign*, January 2011, 25.

[207] Dallin H. Oaks, "Have you been Saved?" (May 1998). "First, all mortals have been saved from the permanence of death through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. 15:22). As to salvation from sin and the consequences of sin, our answer to the question of whether or not we have been saved is 'yes, but with conditions.' Our third article of faith declares our belief: 'We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel' (A of F 1:3).

insufficiency of faith in Christ for eternal life,[208] and the necessity of abandoning all sin[209] and keeping all the commandments[210] to obtain eternal life.

In sum, the Neo-Orthodox LDS movement does represent a trend toward downplaying the need to stop sinning and keep all the commandments all the time for eternal life, and so they find themselves outside the full council of historic

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[208] Oaks, "Have You Been Saved." "Finally, in another usage familiar with and unique to Latter-day Saints, the words saved and salvation are also used to denote exaltation or eternal life (see Abr. 2:11). This is sometimes referred to as the 'fullness of salvation' (Bruce R. McConkie, The Mortal Messiah, 4 vols. [1979–81], 1:242). This salvation requires more than repentance and baptism by appropriate priesthood authority. It also requires the making of sacred covenants, including eternal marriage, in the temples of God, and faithfulness to those covenants by enduring to the end. If we use the word salvation to mean 'exaltation,' it is premature for any of us to say that we have been 'saved' in mortality. That glorious status can only follow the final judgment of Him who is the Great Judge of the living and the dead."

[209] Ibid. Oaks says, "We are not saved in our sins, as by being unconditionally saved through confessing Christ and then, inevitably, committing sins in our remaining lives (see Alma 11:36–37). We are saved from our sins (see Hel. 5:10) by a weekly renewal of our repentance and cleansing through the grace of God and His blessed plan of salvation (see 3 Ne. 9:20–22)."

[210] Ibid. Oaks says, "Some Christians accuse Latter-day Saints who give this answer of denying the grace of God through claiming they can earn their own salvation. We answer this accusation with the words of two Book of Mormon prophets. Nephi taught, 'For we labor diligently … to persuade our children … to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Ne. 25:23). And what is 'all we can do'? It surely includes repentance (see Alma 24:11) and baptism, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. Moroni pleaded, 'Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ' (Moro. 10:32)."

LDS theology. This movement, however, still falls short of historic Christianity's gospel. The Neo-Orthodox LDS theologians do not see faith in Christ as sufficient for eternal life and thus maintain a form of works-righteousness, though not as full-blown as the institutional version of the LDS gospel. They also generally hold on to a view of the atonement that is both conditional and unconditional, which again separates their view of justification from their Protestant friends. Lastly, if published material and conference talks are any indication of the spiritual pulse of LDS theology, the researcher sees no reason to think the institutional view of the atonement/justification/grace has changed or is changing in the least, though such a change would be welcomed.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this project, the question, "Are Mormons Christian?" was highlighted. Just as LDS members do not consider Fundamentalist LDS members as LDS, the researcher believes traditional Christians are right to withhold the title of "Christian" from LDS members. LDS belief and doctrine strays considerably from the biblical standard. In this project, doctrines and beliefs in which there is wide divergence have not even been considered, such as the doctrine of man, the doctrine of God, the nature of Jesus, the nature of the

Holy Spirit, the role of the Prophets and Apostles, and the role of Gethsemane in the atonement. All we have considered here is the nature of justifying grace, and the gulf between LDS and Christian theology remains unabridged.

Traditional LDS belief holds that the atonement has a dual nature; conditional and unconditional. Jesus' atoning sacrifice gracefully touches every human, gaining them resurrection from the dead. It also opens the door to eternal life for every individual. However, to gain eternal life one must meet certain conditions. These conditions include keeping all the commandments of God, forsaking all sin permanently, and enduring in this state to the end of one's mortal life. All of this shows that, in no small way, faith in Jesus' sacrificial death is insufficient for the fullness of salvation – eternal life. While personal righteousness does not fully "earn" one eternal life (it cannot be earned, and is only received through Christ's atoning grace), God does require individual righteousness in order to "access His grace."[211] In other words, according to LDS theology, "*Our* righteousness does make it possible for His righteousness (grace) to save us."[212] Grace is needed and even spoken of as sufficient for eternal life (the atonement pays the full price), but the atoning grace is only

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[211] *Missionary Preparation* 073.

[212] Ibid.

"allocated to us on condition of our obedience to His commandments."[213] The problem is not that LDS theology does not hold that grace is sufficient for eternal life; the problem is that faith in Christ is not sufficient to receive saving grace. LDS Prophet/President Ezra Taft Benson summed this up succinctly, saying, "Grace consists of God's gift to His children wherein He gave His Only Begotten Son that whosoever would believe in Him and comply with His laws and ordinances would have everlasting life." According to Benson, grace is what gets you eternal life, but getting grace is the hard part. This is very different from what Jesus shares as essential for eternal life in John 3:16, where He says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Notice the difference between Jesus' and Benson's formulations. How wide the divide!

Many LDS members, when confronted with the problem of "denying all ungodliness" prior to God's grace being sufficient (Moroni 10:32), will respond by saying that nobody's perfect, but that is what the atonement is for, to make up for our imperfection (you do your best, and God makes up the rest). The researcher, of course, agrees that we need God's grace for eternal life, but the LDS person is in a different position because to get the saving grace they need, they have to have denied themselves of all ungodliness already. Only then can they receive the grace they need to make up for their shortcomings. This is problematic, to

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[213] Ibid.

say the least. Even if the LDS church's metaphysics and theology of justification were correct, it is doubtful its plan of salvation can actually deliver any human to eternal life.

Neo-Orthodox LDS theologians seem to have noticed this problem and some have attempted to emphasize more biblical ideas in regard to key areas like repentance and what keeping the commands entails. While their turn to biblical concepts in these areas are to be applauded, these redefinitions do not fit well with other aspects of traditional LDS metaphysics, such as the insufficiency of faith in Christ for salvation. As much as an LDS member might want to cling to Christ for eternal life and trust in the merit and mercy of the messiah, Jesus can be but a door man for them.[214] Neo-Orthodox theologians still rely on the temple and priesthood authority to gain their place in eternal life, and recognize turning to God and placing faith in Jesus' death as necessary, but ultimately insufficient. As long as one refrains from seeing faith in Christ's sacrifice as necessary *and*

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[214] Oaks, "Fundamental to Our Faith," 25. "Because of His Resurrection, all who have ever lived will be raised from the dead. He is the Savior, whose atoning sacrifice opens the door for us to be forgiven of our personal sins so that we can be cleansed to return to the presence of God our Eternal Father."

sufficient, that person is not in line with traditional Christianity.[215] Moreover, as

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[215] This understanding of faith in Christ's sacrifice as necessary and sufficient is a common tie that binds most of the Christian world together. While not in the scope of this thesis, an important question will be raised by some readers. This question might go something like this, "If we judge the LDS church to be outside of Christ's church due to their insistence that turning to Christ in faith is necessary but insufficient for eternal life, have we not also eliminated other groups we would ordinarily include under the 'Christian' umbrella?" In other words, have we proved too much? This is a complex question, but the researcher would argue that this distinction (faith in Christ's sacrifice being necessary and sufficient) is useful. For instance, in 1999 the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation together published a *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, where they together confessed, "Justification thus means that Christ himself is our righteousness, in which we share through the Holy Spirit in accord with the will of the Father. Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works." This declaration can be found at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html (accessed November 29, 2011). Because they together speak of receiving eternal life on the sole basis of faith, resting in Christ's merit, whatever theological differences the Lutheran and Catholic church may have with each other or with other Christian groups, these groups are united with all other so confessing Christians. In contrast, a faculty task force from Biola (Robert L. Saucy, John Coe, and Alan W. Gomes) prepared a report in 1998 entitled, *Eastern Orthodox Teachings in Comparison With the Doctrinal Position of Biola University*, in which they found that in the Eastern Orthodox Church (EO), "participation in the various sacramental means of grace as a necessary instrumental condition for obtaining final salvation thus denies that 'to become children of God and receive eternal life' is simply through 'receiving Jesus as Savior' without additional necessary instrumental conditions (pg. 28)." The result of this belief is that "the position that the believer is justified on the sole ground of Christ's righteousness appropriated through faith alone is denied (pg. 5)." This report can be found at: http://people.biola.edu/alang/EO/Report.pdf (accessed November 29, 2011). Because the EO Church holds faith in Christ as necessary, but insufficient, and thus does not agree with traditional Christianity that humans are justified on the

long as the LDS church allows its temples to stand, they will be a continual monumental reminder of their church's lack of trust in the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice.

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simple and single ground of the shed blood of Christ and upon the simple and single condition of faith in Him who shed the blood, the researcher hopes and prays, as with the LDS, that someday soon we could see a miracle occur akin to what happened with the Worldwide Church of God, now known as Grace Communion International.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTION AND DESIGN

Evangelism Focal Points

We will now consider what implications the above findings have on evangelism to the LDS. As we have seen throughout this paper, LDS theology differs greatly from Christian theology with regards to justifying grace. In what follows the researcher hopes to show how focusing on the sufficiency of faith in Christ for the fullness of salvation (eternal life), and the impossible task of "truly repenting" and keeping the commandments in order to receive the grace we need to gain the greatest blessings in the afterlife, can be an effective evangelism technique. This will be done through a training program to equip traditional Christians for evangelism to the LDS.

Sufficiency of Faith in Christ For Eternal Life

One difficulty in sharing bible verses with LDS members is that, as we have noted, there is a general suspicion of the Bible when its message conflicts with LDS scripture or teaching. Thus, while one could quote Bible verses that show faith in Christ as necessary and sufficient for eternal life, these verses may

not carry their full weight because the LDS person may assume these texts are corrupt or that they have been superseded by more current teachings. However, it is helpful to present a biblical view of the gospel so that the LDS member can see the difference between the LDS gospel and the Christian gospel. The sufficiency of faith in Christ for eternal life is certainly a key difference.

Repentance and Keeping the Commandments

This second focal point may aid the Christian in establishing the desperate condition of the LDS member. When an LDS person meditates on what is required for eternal life, according to LDS scripture and authorities (as we have outlined above), he/she will be forced to conclude that he or she will never attain fellowship with his/her Heavenly Father. In fact, it will become obvious that no person will ever attain eternal life by following the LDS teachings. When this “bad news” is understood, the good news of the true gospel can be heard with fresh ears and perhaps grace can take hold of the individual.

Current Evangelistic Strategies to LDS Community

Many approaches are needed in evangelism, and there is no one silver bullet that will convert Mormons on the spot every time. That being said,

wisdom can be used in selecting more or less effective/appropriate methods in evangelization. Three main evangelism strategies that are current today will be mapped below.

Protesters

There are some who travel to Salt Lake every General conference and shout at the LDS conference goers. Some "evangelists" use props and provocative signs/costumes to get attention. These sorts of evangelists have been seen throwing Books of Mormon on the ground and dragging temple garments down the street. Because the researcher does not know these evangelists personally, he is unsure their what their motive is but would say this is likely the least effective evangelization strategy.[1] For one, the gospel is not communicated, and instead, many people who endure the scorn of the protesters only feel threatened or hated. Secondly, many LDS people will recognize their actions as contentious, and thus, from Satan.[2] Their activity is also seen as anti-Mormon, and thus many Mormons will not engage with them. These groups often taunt Mormons and condemn the LDS church and its members, which makes headlines but not many converts.

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[1] However, the researcher did meet one ex-LDS gal who turned to Christ after a Christian told her she would fry in Hell like bacon.

[2] 3 Nephi 11:29

Just to be clear, not every one who goes to General Conference to evangelize is in this “Protester” category. There are those, like Chip Thompson and the Mormonism Research Ministry staff who go to evangelize and have great conversations with individuals in a non-contentious manner. These types of folks will be discussed in the next section.

Conversationalists

There is a type of evangelism that aims at getting into conversations with strangers (though friendship evangelism is not discouraged, it is more about going out and “cold calling”). These conversations are often initiated by handing out a tract or asking if a respondent would be willing to take a survey, but they can be started in a myriad of ways.[3] Once the conversation begins, it is often open ended and the conversation flows wherever it naturally goes.

This style has the advantage of being non-contentious most of the time and is a prime example of sowing seed liberally because one does not know which ones will take root. The down side to this is that relationships are often not built and it is not generally part of an ongoing conversation.

Within this group, there are three major strategies employed after conversations begin: historical issues, scripture debate, impossible gospel. In

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[3] This style could be adapted and used as one witnesses to friends, family or co-workers.

what follows, these strategies will be explained and examined.

Historical Issues

The historical issues approach brings to the LDS member's attention distinctive LDS beliefs that do not seem to match up with reality. For example, one might ask the LDS member why no archeological evidence for the Book of Mormon has been found or why none of the Book of Mormon lands have been identified. This is perplexing for many LDS members because not one weapon, city, coin, or other archeological evidence has been unearthed anywhere in the Americas that could give credibility to the claims of Mormonism.

Another historical issue that receives lots of airtime is the false prophecies of Joseph Smith. Deuteronomy 18 informs us that if a person who claims to be a prophet makes a false prophecy, the person is not a prophet of God. Evangelists will then show false prophecies of Joseph Smith from LDS scripture.[4]

The goal of this strategy is to call into question the credibility of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Several well-produced videos have been produced in this vein by Living Hope ministries[5] and the information found in

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[4] D&C 84, D&C 114, and 1 Nephi 13, are often used as examples.

[5] Bible vs. The Book of Mormon, DNA vs. The Book of Mormon, Unveiling Grace, The Lost Book of Abraham, The Bible vs. Joseph Smith.

these videos often become topics for conversationalists. The Modern Microfilm Company, founded by Jerald and Sandra Tanner (Utah Lighthouse Ministries), is another good example of an evangelistic strategy that brings historical issues to light. This information is then published and distributed.

There is much to be said about this approach, as many LDS members are ignorant of the many issues that strike at the heart of the credibility of the LDS church. The downside is that most LDS members will write this tactic off as anti-Mormon. Once one has been perceived as anti-Mormon, it is hard to present the gospel in a way that will be heard. Another problem with this approach is that one rarely gets around to sharing the actual good news of Jesus Christ. A debate over the issues being discussed is held often, but no actual preaching of the gospel occurs. Where there is no gospel preached, there can be no hearing of the gospel, and where there is no hearing, there can be no belief and, thus, no salvation. The historical facts can play a part of evangelism, but they should not play the primary role. Perhaps once one understands that the LDS and traditional Christian gospels are different, one will wonder how one chooses between the two and the historical issues can be used to help one “choose the right path.”

Scripture Debate

Another tool in the conversationalist’s tool belt is effective debate over key scripture passages. This has two functions: 1) to demonstrate that LDS

interpretations of scripture are in error and 2) to show that the unique teachings of the LDS church are not in line with the truth of God's word. Many books have been written in this vein.[6] Whether one is discussing the nature of God, baptism of the dead, or a myriad of other issues, proper exposition and interpretation of scripture is key. This can be especially effective when the LDS person comes to see that the Christian interpretation makes much more sense of a given scripture.

The problem with this approach is that it is rarely the case that the LDS person is swayed by Christian interpretations. Most of the time, the LDS member agrees to disagree, siding with their church leadership/publications interpretation rather than the Christian's. In many cases the LDS person's view is shaped by other revelations the LDS church believes to be scripture and these texts "correct" the mistaken interpretation of the Christian. So, despite the Bible being clear that there is no God beside, before, or after Yahweh,[7] Joseph Smith's revelations supersede this core teaching of the Bible.

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[6] Noteworthy examples include Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning From the Scriptures with the Mormons*; Richard Abanes, *Becoming Gods*; Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson, *Mormonism 101*.

[7] Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6-8; 45:5-6; 45:22; Psalm 90:2; Deuteronomy 6:4

Impossible Gospel

Presenting the LDS gospel and demonstrating that it is hopeless can be an effective witnessing tool. The researcher first learned this approach from Chip Thompson, who learned it from Keith Walker.[8] This approach, much like the Way of the Master evangelism strategy, hopes to show the LDS person that they have no hope of attaining eternal life. This is then contrasted with the assurance the Christian has based on the biblical view of salvation.

Some evangelists who use this strategy carry a copy of Spencer Kimball's book, *Miracle of Forgiveness*. That book was cited often in Chapter 3 of this project because it is as straightforward and blunt as one can be in regards to the requirements for true repentance, one of the key requirements for eternal life. Most LDS members are familiar with the book, even if they have not read it or did not like it due to its harshness. The book continues to be quoted at General Conference and in publications of the LDS church, and so, continues to be a prime example of something the LDS church is emphasizing for today. Appendix 1 has many quotes from Kimball that show that only the truly repentant receive forgiveness, and only those who have stopped sinning are truly repentant.

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[8] A video of Keith training people in this witnessing strategy can be found at Mormonism Research Ministry's video section (mrm.tv). The video is entitled, "Mormonism's Impossible Gospel—Getting Them Lost". Mark Cares' book, *Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons*, is also a great example of this approach.

Not all who use the Impossible Gospel approach utilize Kimball or other Church leaders and publications, choosing instead to focus on The Standard Works. With this strategy, the evangelist will often show the LDS person what is expected of them. This is often accomplished using three scriptures/scripture combinations.

1. 2 Nephi 25:23- *"For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace we are saved, after all we can do."*

Most LDS members are familiar with this verse. The key is that Christ's grace only kicks in after you do all that you can do. One phrase LDS members often kick around when talking about this verse is, "You do your best, and He'll make up the rest." Evangelists will then ask, "What is the best you can do?" Just as you do not get clean until "after" you've bathed, so according to 2 Nephi 25:23, you do not receive the grace you need until you have done all that you can do. The evangelist will ask, "Have you done everything you could have…could you have helped one more person today, could you have prayed 2 extra minutes…are you really doing *everything* you can?"

1 Nephi 3:7, another verse LDS members are familiar with, helps the LDS member see the problem.[9] 1 Nephi 3:7 reads,

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the

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[9] 1 Nephi 3:7 is a scripture mastery verse.

> things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.

"So," the evangelist asks, "are you able to do all that the Lord commands?" Based on 1 Nephi 3:7, yes they are able. So then, would not obeying all that the Lord commands be the best you could do? If the LDS person has not done that, they have not done all they can do, and thus, they do not have God's grace. As Mark Cares points out, Matthew 5:48 becomes a very scary verse, in that verse the Lord commands us to be perfect. So, all we can do is be perfect, and no LDS member can honestly admit they have done that.

2. D&C 58:42-43- *Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.*

These scriptures are useful because they show the necessary and impossible nature of LDS repentance. On the one hand it shows that the LDS person needs to repent if they will get forgiveness and no one who is not forgiven can inherit the Kingdom.[10] Further, it gives the test one can use to determine if they are repentant, for "behold, he will confess them and forsake them." Forsaking means leaving and not returning. Therefore, only the person

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[10] See Alma 11:37- "No unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven."

who has stopped sinning can say they are truly repentant.[11] One can cite Alma 11:37 as support of this idea, stating, "…ye cannot be saved in your sins." The opposite of being in your sins is being out of them, and thus, one can only be saved if they are out of their sins.

Many LDS members, feeling the weight of this, will look to the afterlife as the time they will actually get around to finishing the repentance process. The problem with this is that it goes against many LDS authorities, and most problematic, the Book of Mormon. Alma 34:32 makes it clear that, "…this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God." That is why Alma urges just a verse later not to "procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed." Indeed, Alma warns,

> If ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.[12]

These verses show the necessity of repentance in this life, and repentance means forsaking (coming out of) your sins. This is not good news

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[11] This interpretation is shared by numerous LDS authorities, as demonstrated in Chapter 3 and Appendix 1.

[12] Alma 34:35

because unless one has stopped sinning, he/she would not meet the requirements.

3. Moroni 10:32- *Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ…"*

This verse is quoted often in LDS conferences and books. The first half and last line are quoted by Neo-Orthodox theologians to emphasize the role of grace in attaining the fullness of salvation. However, as Appendix 2 shows, when this verse is quoted in General Conference, it is most often used to define what "All you can do" is. In these instances, emphasis is placed on the conditional clause, "If you deny yourselves of all ungodliness…then is his grace sufficient…" God's perfecting and sufficient grace is only given to those who have first denied themselves of all (not some or most) ungodliness. While grace is sufficient, obtaining the grace is impossible.

Conclusion

The conversationalist style has much to commend itself. This style allows one to enter into dialogue with many people and can be done in a non-contentious way. In the researcher's experience ministering in Utah, both as an outsider coming to Utah for missions and as a church planter doing evangelism as part of the life of the church, out of the three conversationalist strategies, the

"Impossible Gospel" strategy seems to be the most effective. It is seen as less "anti-Mormon." It does not immediately bring up any "sore spots,"[13] and thus meaningful and productive conversations can be had. The downside to this strategy is that it often leads to despair and continued debate over the verses. If one only focuses on how impossible the LDS gospel is, the gospel has not been preached, and if the LDS person does not agree with the assessment of the verses in question, you may be looked at with suspicion. The researcher's evangelism method, which focuses on the necessary and sufficient nature of faith in Christ for the fullness of salvation and the impossibility of "truly repenting" and "keeping the commandments," will be unpacked later in this section and can be seen as a corrective to this conversational approach.

Relationship Building

Another method for evangelism calls for building relationships, which opens communication lines and builds bridges to the gospel in time. Again, there is much to commend this method and there are many times when this model is the best approach. The two models that seem most prevalent today are the "bridges" approach pioneered by David Rowe[14] and Greg Johnson's

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[13] E.g. Polygamy, Blacks in the Priesthood, Adam God doctrine, etc.

[14] David Rowe, *I Love Mormons: A New Way to Share Christ with Latter-day Saints* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005).

"Standing Together" model.[15] In what follows, the basic strategy in both of these models will be laid out.

Bridges Approach

One thing that Rowe thinks separates his approach from the "Warrior-Saint" approach is that while he does advocate using Scripture, he warns against Bible bashing just to prove a point. Rather than proof texting, Rowe encourages Christens to talk about how they have *experienced* God's word. Rather than insist that salvation is a gift, he suggests talking about how God's gift of grace is experienced. This, he says, makes it palpable, and is the most powerful way to talk about the Bible with LDS friends.[16] To this end, Rowe stresses the role of the parables of Jesus.

Rowe also maintains that Christians should be ready to discuss theology with LDS members *when* God opens the door for it.[17] When one has built bridges that connect our lives to the lives of LDS members, questions will come, and when the moments come, the Christian should be ready to give a gracious

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[15] Exemplified by the dialogs between Greg Johnson and Robert Millet, out of which the book, *Bridging the Divide,* emerged.

[16] Rowe, 62.

[17] Ibid., 72. Rowe warns about "running ahead of God's opportune moments" by jumping the gun with our evangelism.

and loving response that invites deeper communication about theological issues.

Rowe advocates the bridges model because he sees the LDS epistemology as essentially "romantic." That is, "what Mormons are taught to trust as the way of knowing spiritual truth is their experienced feelings." Evangelists who do not understand this are often frustrated when their best scriptural exposition and slam dunk arguments against the credibility of the LDS church are met with the LDS member bearing their testimony that the LDS church is true, the Book of Mormon is God's Word, Joseph Smith restored the church, and President Monson is God's prophet who speaks God's word to us today. These things are "known" to be true by the LDS member, and no matter what evidence/argument one presents, the Mormon's experience of the truth of the LDS church will win. Rowe advocates learning to present the Christian gospel in a way that is attractive to the LDS member. One way he suggests we do this is by telling about a recent answer to prayer or a stunning act of God we have experienced or a gospel-like image from a film.[18] Finding common ground and meeting there is a key to opening lines of redemptive communication.

There is much to learn from Rowe. By in large Rowe has hit the nail on the head in terms of how we should relate to our LDS neighbors, friends, and families. What is lacking in his strategy is any concrete way to actually

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[18] Rowe, 124.

communicate the gospel when the door is opened. Further, his approach is a good long-term approach. It expects that living a life seasoned with salt (passionate for Christ and open about how God shows up in your life) will attract questions and thoughtful discussion. However, it is largely passive in that you wait for the questions to come. While the questions will come, many times there is a need for boldness in initiating conversation. That is, there is a time for active sharing and a time for passive waiting for the door to open.

Standing Together Model

If you are not from Utah, you may not have heard of Greg Johnson's organization, Standing Together, until you read about it in the November 2009 issue of Christianity Today.[19] Johnson has met with Robert Millet numerous times for public dialogues in which they demonstrate a kind and gentle, yet uncompromising, dialogue between members of different, and historically antagonistic, faiths. Greg has said he hopes his dialogues will "lead to increased understanding of each other's faith, reduced confrontationalism, and an improved ability to share the hope that resides in us in a way that is both

[19] Richard N. Ostling, "Most Improbable Dialogue," *Christianity Today* (November 2009).

respectful and gentle."[20] They are an example of friends who are open and honest with each other, who treat one another with civility and, at the same time, have courage to ask the hard questions. That said, the researcher has three major reservations about this ministry.

First, as a model for dialogue, Standing Together falls short. At numerous places Johnson asks Millett a question and Millett offers an answer that, while correct, does not draw up the fullness of what His church teaches. Johnson, rather than pressing him to own up to what his church teaches on the matter, allows the answer to stand, which promotes miscommunication and promulgates mis-information.

As an example, in *Bridging the Divine*, Johnson asks Millett if he believes he is "saved by grace or by works."[21] First of all, this question, when terms are not defined, can only confuse and mislead. Millett, in response, says that salvation is a "gift that is not earned." Of course, at one level, for the LDS, that is true. All humans are, according to LDS theology, unconditionally (by grace alone), saved from the effects of physical death through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Millet goes on to say that his faith in Christ expresses itself through works and that these works are necessary, but insufficient, for salvation. In all of

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[20] Robert Millet and Greg Johnson, *Bridging the Divide* (New York: Monkfish Book Publishing Company, 2007), *xxvi.*

[21] Ibid., 49.

this, Johnson does not attempt to show the divide between the two, nor does he ask Millett reconcile this with what his church currently publishes on the matter to see if he is speaking for Mormonism. The public sees how well Evangelical Johnson and Mormon Millett get along, but mostly all we see is agreement. Johnson and Millett agree that "good works are a by-product of true, saving faith in Christ,"[22] and there is no follow up, no clarity on how their traditions differ. Civility requires tolerance, but tolerance is only tolerance when disagreement surfaces. The problem with these dialogues is that, often, neither party is intentional about showing where they actually differ.

Today, Mormon leaders seem to be trying hard to be seen as mainstream, especially as we enter into a Presidential election which boasts two LDS candidates, and this ministry helps that task by making it difficult for the average American, or Christian for that matter, to discern a genuine difference between the two faiths. One result of this is that "because the dialogues fail to define clearly the serious differences that prevent Mormonism from being a saving faith, the sense of urgency to speak with the Mormon people is lost."[23]

The second main problem, coming on the heels of the first, is that this lack of clarity produces confusion. One pastor friend had an ex-LDS parishioner

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[22] Millet and Johnson, *Bridging the Divide*, 53.

[23] McKeever and Johnson, "The Bridge or the Beehive," 30.

come to his office the day after he attended one of these events, seriously questioning if he should have left the LDS church. Further, LDS members who leave the dialogues feeling like Millet's explanations have withstood Johnson's comments and questions may be less inclined to look any further into traditional Christian claims regarding salvation.

Lastly, Johnson has said that he is pleased to hear Millett speak of the "unmerited" nature of salvation, the role of grace, and the centrality of Jesus Christ in personal salvation.[24] This would be great news if Millet was actually rejecting past LDS church teachings on the matter and moving to a more orthodox view.[25] Unfortunately, he is merely emphasizing those parts that are most in line with evangelical theology while still retaining the LDS metaphysics behind it. As McKeever and Johnson point out, Millett throws around the term "unmerited" while at the same time confessing that he is hesitant to say that eternal life is obtained through faith alone.

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[24] McKeever and Johnson, "The Bridge or the Beehive," 30.

[25] This is something LDS church authorities have outright denied. See General Authority Bruce Hafen's 2004 Conference address, "The Atonement: All for All," *Ensign,* May 2004, 97. In this address, Apostle Hafen confesses, "in recent years, we Latter-day Saints have been teaching, singing, and testifying much more about the Savior Jesus Christ." He also, rather frankly, states, "Others *mistakenly* think our Church is moving toward an understanding of the relationship between grace and works that draws on Protestant teachings. Such misconceptions prompt me to consider today the Restoration's unique Atonement doctrine."

These objections to the Standing Together method notwithstanding, the researcher is pleased that in another ministry of Standing Together, theological discussions are taking place between evangelicals and LDS authorities. It is hoped that God would use Standing Together to influence and evangelize LDS leaders and that those leaders would, in turn, influence rank and file LDS members.[26] The researcher does not object to this strategy at all, but he is, as noted above, concerned with the public front of the Standing Together ministry.

A Step Forward

The researcher has and will continue to learn a lot from many of the above approaches, and at any given time, wisdom and good judgment may lead to emphasizing one approach over another given the situation and the needs of the person being evangelized. Rather than think that this new methodology trumps the rest, the researcher thinks the visual aid, combined with a short explanation, can accommodate several forms listed above. The methodology that has been worked out is equally comfortable and helpful in the Bridge Building and Conversational models. In both cases the visual aid approach can augment the results of the overarching model.

For the conversationalist, because the visual aid first explains, in detail,

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[26] We would all rejoice to see something akin to what happened with the Worldwide Church of God happen among the Mormons.

both the LDS and traditional Christian view of justifying grace, it is easy to see the differences. This means the evangelist knows that his/her presentation is clear and the distinctions are clearly drawn out. Of course this should be done with civility, gentleness and great respect. Every opportunity should be taken to ensure that the Mormon feels that what is said is fair and accurate and should be allowed to share when he/she does not feel his/her beliefs are being represented. Anecdotally, when sharing this visual aid and explanation with LDS members, many comments like, “wow, you have really done your homework,” have been offered. This has been shared with missionaries, laity, and close LDS friends, and the responses have always been positive.

The presentation itself, at times, functions as a bridge building event in that most LDS members are pleased when their views are adequately represented. When anyone feels that their beliefs are being short changed, walls go up and communication ceases to be productive. On the other side, when the LDS member sees that you are really trying to understand and accurately represent their views, they are generally receptive to hear the contrasting viewpoint traditional Christianity offers.

The visual aid is also at home for bridge builders. When the LDS friend does have questions, the aid could help the evangelist present the gospel clearly and effectively.

In either model, the nice thing about using the visual aid is that the conversation tends to be about the gospel and not secondary issues. The other

issues tend to come up, but hopefully they come up as the LDS person, having seen the difference between the two gospels, is forced to decide between them.

Research Design

Overview

To accomplish the goals of encouraging Christian evangelism to LDS members and getting beyond communication issues so that LDS members can hear the gospel, and based on the two focal points of evangelism established above, a two-pronged research project was developed. First, a training course was developed for Christians to go through (Group A) that educated them on the primary differences between LDS and traditional Christian views of justifying grace and they received a visual aid tool to use in evangelism to LDS members. This seemed to be an excellent way to overcome one of the primary reasons people do not evangelize: they do not feel they know how to share their faith.[27] The survey they took assessed: 1) Participants' confidence in evangelism to LDS members before and after the training; 2) Whether or not the participant perceived the visual aid to be a useful tool in evangelism. The hypothesis prior to beginning research was that a significantly increased understanding of the differences between LDS and traditional Christian views of justifying grace would

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[27] Mark Cahill, *One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven* (Rockwall: Biblical Discipleship Publishers, 2002), 48.

be observed, and thus an increased confidence in sharing the gospel with LDS members.

LDS members were the targets for the Group B survey. This survey attempted to answer three main questions: 1) Did the visual aid accurately describe the LDS teaching on justifying grace?; 2) Did the explanation of the visual aid give the LDS member more confidence in explaining the difference between traditional Christian and LDS views of justifying grace?; 3) Did the explanation of the visual aid increase the LDS member's awareness of the discontinuity between traditional Christian justifying grace and what the LDS church has historically held it to be?

It was clear at the outset that there might not be a strong tie between the conversion of LDS members and clarity on the difference between the LDS and Christian gospel, with special focus on the role of grace in justification. It is unknown how to overcome this problem *per se*, but because of a personal commitment to the scriptures, the researcher is convinced faith comes through hearing the gospel (Romans 10:13-15) and the methodology is aimed at cutting through the barriers that block effective hearing of the gospel among LDS members. The hypothesis was, following the presentation, that a significantly higher understanding of the differences between the two gospels among the LDS participants would be observed.

Group A Detail

Group A consisted of Christians who were either on mission trips to evangelize LDS members, church groups who wanted a workshop in evangelism to LDS members, or Sunday School groups that were curious about the LDS faith. Populations of these sorts helped the goal to be reached, which was to target evangelical Christians who are already motivated to share the gospel but do not know what the key differences are and/or do not have a game plan or specific methodology for sharing the gospel with LDS members. The survey was conducted in a group setting, all portions of the training and survey were anonymous, no personal information was collected, and participation was 100% voluntary.

Group A was informed that possible benefits to the them included gaining a detailed understanding of LDS soteriology, the strengthening of their own understanding of salvation in Christ, and the provision of free training for evangelism to LDS members.

After signing an informed consent form, Group A was given three to five minutes to complete a preliminary survey in which their confidence in evangelism to LDS members and their awareness of the differences between LDS and traditional Christian justifying grace were recorded. Following the survey, an approximately thirty minute training seminar was given detailing the view of justifying grace in both traditions. The seminar consisted of lecture,

Power Point slides, and a notes sheet with fill-ins. The training culminated in the presentation of a visual aid that visually summed up the training. An outline of the presentation and visual aid can be found in Appendix 3 and 4.

Following the seminar, participants were given three to five minutes to complete the post-training questionnaire. For detailed information regarding the questions on the questionnaire, see Appendix 5. This post-training seminar questionnaire allowed the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the training and visual aid in: 1) Increasing the Christians confidence in sharing the gospel with LDS members; 2) Increasing the Christian's ability to explain the different role of grace in salvation in LDS and traditional Christian theology; 3) Increasing believer's tendency to share the gospel with LDS members.

Group B Detail

Group B surveys were conducted among strangers in public places. The majority of the surveys that were conducted were intentionally collected from research assistants in order to ensure the respondents' decisions were not being influenced or slanted in any way. This carries some risk, as the explanation and presentation of the survey is beyond the control of the researcher. For this reason, each research assistant was trained and walked through the survey collection process. Research assistants were trained to follow an outline so that the results would be standardized and each questionnaire would represent a response to the same basic presentation.

Research assistants approached individuals in a public place and asked if they would be willing to participate in this study anonymously. The potential respondent was informed that one factor that makes honest conversation among LDS members and traditional Christians difficult is a lack of understanding of some of the basic terms we hold in common. The respondent was told this research is aimed at learning to break through these barriers so that LDS members and traditional Christians can communicate more effectively on important matters. Potential respondents were also informed that participation would help them gain a greater clarity on the distinctive nature of both LDS and traditional Christian theology. The time projected to complete the survey was approximately 10 minutes.

If the individual was interested, he/she signed our consent form and answered several preliminary questions. These questions gave us a base line we could later use to compare with the results from the follow-up survey. Following the preliminary survey, the research assistant presented the respondent with the visual aid and explained the different roles of grace in LDS and traditional Christian theology. This presentation lasted approximately five minutes. An outline of the presentation can be found in Appendix 6, and followed this basic form: 1) Defining traditional Christianity's view of how one gains eternal life; 2) Defining how eternal life is gained in the LDS church.

In the first part of the presentation the respondent is told the Bible teaches that God created us all and that we are all accountable to God. Further,

we have all turned away from God and, having rebelled in sin, cannot dwell with God for eternity. But God has acted in Jesus to atone for our sins and all those who enter God's new covenant through repentance and faith have eternal life. Abraham, in Genesis 15, prefigured this covenant. In Genesis 15, an animal is split in half, a sign of what would happen to the covenant maker if he/she did not live up to their end of the covenant, but instead of both parties, Abraham and God, ratifying the covenant, *only* God "signs on the dotted line" by walking through the torn carcass. Thus, Abraham is a part of the covenant, but it is an unconditional covenant he entered into by faith. This, then, is the kind of covenant we have today, according to Romans 4. This section of the presentation concludes by showing the respondent the visual aid (see Appendix 4) that shows the human predicament being overcome by the atonement of Jesus, which is applied to all who call upon his name and enter into covenant with him through faith and repentance. Those who do this have eternal life. It is stressed that turning to Jesus in faith is necessary and sufficient to receive the fullness of salvation – eternal life.

This is then contrasted with the visual aid for LDS "soteriology." As the presenter shows the visual aid of the LDS pathway to eternal life, it is stressed that, in the LDS view, the atonement has both unconditional and conditional aspects. The unconditional aspects are given to humankind universally through the atonement of Jesus. It does not take faith to receive and it is fully an act of grace that God grants us immortality, the resurrection of the body. However, we

also need our individual sins forgiven, and that again happens by God's grace as we relate to him by covenant. One enters the covenant through faith, repentance, baptism and the receiving the Holy Ghost, but in order to get eternal life, one must also progress to true repentance and keep all the commandments of God until the end of their life. If they have by then denied themselves of all ungodliness, then God's perfecting (exalting/eternal life bestowing) grace is sufficient. In the end it is reiterated that faith in Jesus is necessary but not sufficient for eternal life.

Lastly, following the presentation, respondents were asked to answer a few follow-up questions. The questionnaires can be seen in Appendix 5.

Summary

The research component of this project seeks to establish a new method that educates Christians as to where the real differences between traditional Christian and LDS theology are, and enables LDS members to hear the good news of Jesus Christ in a way that does not get "lost in translation." To accomplish this, the visual aid and its explanation, will be evaluated for effectiveness for these purposes in both Christians and LDS populations.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

Results

Group A Result

The training and visual aid were found to be effective in all three areas. Among the 42 participants, a full 50% said their confidence in sharing the gospel with LDS members had increased as a result of the training, with almost 70% among those who registered an average or below average confidence in sharing the gospel with an LDS member prior to the seminar. Of those who took the survey, 60% said that, as a result of the training, they were better equipped to explain the differences in justifying grace in LDS and traditional Christian theology. Further, 62% percent of the participants said they felt the visual aid would be helpful in presenting the gospel to an LDS member and 55% said they were more likely to share the Gospel with a LDS member if they have the visual aid with them. These numbers, while encouraging, were not overwhelmingly high. In what follows, as the positives of these findings are discussed, a few reasons will also be suggested as to why the actual effectiveness of this survey

is even greater than these numbers suggest.

The results validate the training and visual aid as a valuable tool for equipping and sending Christians to evangelize to LDS members. The valuable aspect of this method is that it allows the Christian to share the gospel without getting into may of the topics by which many LDS members are offended. Rather than attack individuals from the LDS church's history, or the LDS church itself, the Christian, while presenting this material, can quickly and clearly share the gospel. When the focus is on problems with the church and not the gospel, the gospel is not always clearly expressed or heard, and until the non-Christian hears the gospel he/she has no hope of salvation. Many of the historical issues have a place in evangelism as the LDS member, faced with the reality that the LDS church is at odds with biblical/traditional Christianity, may look for ways to decide which gospel to believe. However, the gospel should be the primary focus in evangelism, not other issues. As Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes…" (ESV).

One thing to keep in mind is that the majority of those who were surveyed had shared the gospel with LDS members in the past (60%). Many of those surveyed are Christians who live in Utah and so are more exposed to LDS thought and culture than average Christians, or were Christians who are training for an evangelistic mission trip targeting LDS members. That being the case, I think the results, while solid, would show even higher yields among Christians

who are not already familiar with LDS theology. For example, while 60% said their ability to explain the difference in justifying grace in LDS and traditional Christian theology had increased, thirty-eight percent remained the same, and many of that 38%, in their pre-seminar questionnaire, indicated the highest possible level of ability in explaining the difference in justifying grace in LDS and traditional Christian theology. Out of the 25 respondents who registered an average or below average confidence in explaining the differences between LDS and traditional Christian grace before the training, 84% showed an improvement. This leads to the belief that populations that have had less exposure to LDS theology would see even greater increases across the board. Full survey results can be found in Appendix 7.

Group B Results

Sixty-eight Group B surveys were completed in public places where average folks could be found. LDS members completed 48 surveys. Because the aim of the Group B surveys was to gauge the effectiveness of the visual aid in increasing awareness in the distinction between LDS and traditional Christian views of justifying grace among LDS members, the primary focus will be on the results from the 48 LDS members surveyed.

The first encouraging bit of data found when analyzing the results of the Group B surveys was that 85% of LDS members surveyed felt the visual aid

accurately represents their view of the atonement and grace as an LDS member. This was an important finding, as it showed that the analysis of the LDS view of the atonement and justifying grace accurately reflected the beliefs of LDS members. This project would not be very useful if it merely described a "straw-man" version of LDS grace. Thankfully, the visual aid and accompanying presentation was thought to capture accurately the essence of LDS justifying grace by the overwhelming majority of those surveyed.

Of those who felt the presentation of LDS justifying grace was accurate, over half reported that their confidence in explaining the differences between LDS and traditional Christian views of justifying grace had increased. This finding confirmed the hypothesis following the presentation that a higher understanding of the differences between the two gospels among the LDS participants would be observed. This is encouraging because it means that the visual aid and presentation is cutting through the barriers that block effective hearing of the gospel from LDS members, though the hope had been to see a higher percentage report they could now explain the differences.

Lastly, 15% of LDS members and 20% of non-LDS members in Group B reported seeing a greater difference between LDS and traditional Christian views of the gospel following the presentation. Though it was pleasing to see some movement toward genuine "hearing" of the gospel was reported, it was surprising not to see a greater percentage increase. This 15% seemed especially low since, after the presentation, over 50% of respondents reported that they could

explain the differences in grace better than before exposure to the aid. After some reflection, several possible reasons for the discrepancy between the expectations and results of this research were theorized.

The first possibility is that the visual aid's representation of the two views appeared quite similar due to an effort to make the diagram of the two views appear identical except where the two views differ. The two views being contrasted were actually made to look more similar than they are.

Another possibility considered is that the assessment instrument itself may have been unclear. The presentation revolved around grace and its role in justification, and 50% of those who took the survey reported greater confidence in explaining the role of grace in eternal life. Yet, on the question used to gauge how the visual aid and presentation did in increasing the LDS member's awareness of the difference between the two faiths (Group B, Preliminary question 5, Post-Presentation question 3), the respondent was asked to assess how similar or dissimilar they believed the LDS and traditional Christian *gospel* to be.

When this was recognized, the researcher thought that substituting the term "gospel," rather than sticking with "grace" or "justifying grace," could have been a source of confusion. While the visual aid is ultimately a representation of the gospel as it is taught by both LDS and traditional Christians, because the presentation focused on grace and its role in gaining eternal life, it was thought

that some people may not record how similar or dissimilar the role of grace was, but rather recorded how similar or dissimilar the general gospel was. Due to this possibility the survey was re-administered to a smaller sample after assuring that there was no confusion in the questioning, and yet the same results occurred. This allowed the researcher to rule the "confusion" hypothesis out, but left him wondering why only 15% of LDS members saw a greater difference between the role of justifying grace in obtaining the fullness of salvation, eternal life, in the LDS and traditional Christian worldview.

There is one other possibility whose truth would be difficult to discover and its effect difficult to quantify. There was, among many Group B respondents, an attitude that could be described as, "I'm LDS and don't want people thinking we aren't Christian, so I'm going to say we are the same no matter what." Several conversations took place with respondents along those lines. One individual in particular reported that he believed LDS grace and traditional Christian grace to have the highest possible degree of similarity (five on the scale of one to five, where one meant "very dissimilar," and five meant, "very similar"). After the survey was over, the individual was questioned further, rehearsing the presentation again just to get a sense as to where the breakdown was occurring. After some discussion he revealed that he could in fact see a big distinction after all. The gentleman was asked if he wanted to revise his survey and he said he did not. It was as if he willfully desired the survey to have lower results than it would if he answered honestly. It is unknown if this was a common occurrence,

but several of the research assistants collecting the surveys reported a similar "vibe" on a number of occasions. It could be that many respondents were fearful they were being proselytized or that this survey was anti-Mormon, and so would not reveal that they could see a bigger difference between LDS and traditional Christian grace. It is unknown how much this possibility could explain the low score, but it had an effect on at least the one survey described above.

Project Summary and Conclusion

In the introduction of this paper, it was stated that the goal was to set out to craft an evangelistic methodology that would: 1) Increase Christians propensity to evangelize LDS members; and 2) Increase LDS members comprehension of the differences of the LDS and traditional Christian views of justifying grace. The research has shown those two goals to be accomplished. The first goal was accomplished with much higher marks than the second.

Christians in Group A responded just as it was hoped they would, with a strong 60% overall reporting an increase in their ability to share the difference in the role of grace in salvation and 50% reporting having more confidence in sharing the Gospel with the LDS. These numbers are much higher when looking at just those respondents who marked that prior to the training seminar they had an average or below average level ability in the area in question with 84% reporting an increase in their ability to share the differences in the role of grace in

salvation and 70% reporting more confidence to share the gospel with LDS members.

While the vast majority (85%) of LDS members saw the visual aid as representing their view of the atonement and justifying grace, only 15% reported seeing a greater difference between their view and traditional Christianity's view. It was hoped a greater percentage of LDS members would report that, having studied the visual aid and heard the presentation, they now see LDS justifying grace and traditional Christian justifying grace as more different than they did before the encounter. Still, modest progress was seen and as LDS members see the differences more clearly, that means they are understanding traditional grace better, and thus hearing the gospel more clearly. This is progress, for when the lost hear the gospel, the ball is in their court and, having heard, they are able to exercise a saving faith in Christ.

The research validated the training and visual aid as a valuable tool in equipping and sending Christians to evangelize to LDS members. Further, because such a high percentage of LDS members found the visual aid to represent their view accurately, the researcher feels confident that in training Christians with it, he is enhancing their understanding of what LDS members actually believe and thus not erecting a straw man to be torn down. The researcher also knows that personally, and for many Christians who attended the training, as the contrast between God's grace and other religion's views of salvation grows, we are drawn to worship the God who saved us. The

researcher has grown in his appreciation of his great God and Savior as a result of this research, and believers who go through the training experience a similar drive to worship our amazing God.

One exciting implication this research reveals is that education of Christians on the distinction between LDS and traditional Christian understandings of grace and justification leads Christians to be more proactive in sharing their faith. Thus, if we want Christians to be more active in sharing the gospel with LDS members, churches ought to be more intentional about giving them specific training and tools to accomplish this.

Recommendations

Having completed the research for this project though being unsatisfied with the results for the LDS members (Group B), after some reflection several ideas have been developed for future research that could build on the basic methodology presented here.

First, the researcher would like to see this presentation given to people with whom bridges of mutual respect have been built. The expectation is that this methodology would see much higher yields among those who already know and respect their presenter. Anecdotally, this visual was shared with one LDS gentleman with whom a relationship had been built. He stared at the visual for a minute and said, “Loren, that is beautiful. I wish I had that.” Obviously, the

distinction was not lost on him.[1] This method of sharing the gospel could be a powerful tool when combined with the "bridge building" strategy discussed earlier.

Secondly, the researcher would like to see the visual used again, but with a different presentation. Rather than doing a bullet point presentation that unfolds the gospel in an analytical way, it could be explained in story form. For the LDS member, the parable that Boyd K. Packer tells would be used, called the Mediator, or David McKay's parable of the drowning boy. In that parable, the boy is drowning and a friend reaches out a stick to reach him. The stick is grace, and it can save, but the boy has his role too in that he has to reach out for the stick and hold on as he is dragged out. For the Christian view of grace and justification, Jesus' parable of the prodigal sons would be used, or McKay's story would be contrasted with what Ephesians 2:5 says about being dead in our transgressions. We are not sinking, just needing a stick; we are dead at the bottom of the lake, needing a savior. This would help the LDS member feel the story more than just hearing or seeing the difference. Stories draw the listener in and may connect to the "romantic epistemology" of the LDS worldview.[2]

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[1] I told him he could have it, but he was convinced that his family would disown him if he were to leave the LDS church. Sadly, he may be right. I am still praying God would show him that Jesus is worth the risk.

[2] David Rowe, *I Love Mormons: A New Way to Share Christ with Latter-day Saints* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 118.

APPENDIX 1

LDS AUTHORITIES QUOTATIONS

Repentance

Presidents/Prophet

Joseph Smith Jr., *Documentary History of the Church* vol. 3, 379.
"Repentance is a thing that cannot be trifled with every day. Daily transgression and daily repentance is not that which is pleasing in the sight of God." See also *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. by Joseph Fielding Smith (Deseret Book Company: Salt Lake City, 1976), pg. 148; *The Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 2004), p. 39.)

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 11:375.
"…if we continue to sin, to lie, steal, bear false witness, we must repent of and forsake that sin to have the full efficacy of the blood of Christ. Without this it will be of no effect; repentance must come, in order that the atonement may prove a benefit to us. Let all who are doing wrong cease doing wrong; live no longer in transgression, no matter of what kind; but live every day of your lives according to the revelations given, and so that your examples may be worthy of imitation. Let us remember that we never get beyond the purview of our religion—never, never!" See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, Third ed., 1949), pg. 102.

Wilford Woodruff, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, 54.
"The Holy Ghost will not dwell in an unholy tabernacle. If you would enjoy the full powers and gifts of your religion, you must be pure. If you are guilty of weaknesses, follies of sin, you must repent of them; that is, you must forsake them."

Ibid., 71-72.
"And what is repentance? The forsaking of sin. The man who repents, if he be a

swearer, swears no more; or a thief, steals no more; he turns away from all former sins and commits them no more."

Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Discourses*, 23:127.
"And what is repentance? The forsaking of sin. The man who repents, if he be a swearer, swears no more; or a thief, steals no more; he turns away from all former sins and commits them no more." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, Third ed., 1949), pg. 101.

Joseph F. Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 19:190.
"True repentance is not only sorrow for sins and humble penitence and contrition before God, but it involves the necessity of turning away from them, a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, Third ed., 1949), pg. 100)

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 100.
"True repentance only is acceptable to God, nothing short of it will answer the purpose. Then what is true repentance? True repentance is not only sorrow for sins, and humble penitence and contrition before God but it involves the necessary of turning away from them, a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light." See also *The Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manu*al (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 2004), p. 41.

George Albert Smith, *Conference Report*, October, 102.
"We must have faith in God, we must repent of our sins, because while we are in a sinful condition we are in no way prepared to enter into the celestial kingdom, and we are informed that if we cannot keep the celestial law we cannot abide in celestial glory." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow, (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, Third ed., 1949), pg. 65.

David O. McKay, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay*, 200.
"Repentance, on the other hand, 'is sorrow for sin with *self–condemnation* and complete turning away from sin.' It is therefore, more than remorse; 'it comprehends a change of nature befitting heaven.'"

Ibid., 201.
"Only those who sincerely believe in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the World and who repent of their sins receive the Holy Ghost. Those who are baptized without faith and repentance are mere pretenders."

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 96.
"So we must conclude that those spoken of in verse 26 (D&C 132:26) are those who, having sinned, have *fully repented* and are willing to pay the price of their sinning, else the blessings of exaltation will not follow. Repentance is absolutely necessary for the forgiveness, and the person having sinned, must be cleansed." (Italics original)

Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 11th ed., 152.
"It is required of every man that he fully repent, be baptized for the remission of sins, have hands laid on his head for the gift of the Holy Ghost and for entrance into the Church. If a man tries to get in by some other way he is classed as a thief and robber. Why? Because he is trying to obtain eternal life by fraud! He is trying to obtain a reward of exaltation by counterfeit coin, and this cannot be done."

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Religious Truths Defined*, 273.
"In other words, Paul taught that true repentance is a complete turning from a sin, never reverting to that sin in the future. It is sincere sorrow, or as he explains, 'godly sorrow,' with self-condemnation. True repentance (not again to be repented of) leads to salvation."

Harold B. Lee, *Ye Are the Light of the World: Selected Sermons and Writings of Harold B. Lee*, 321.
"In one sentence, repentance means turning from that which we have done wrong in the sight of the Lord and never repeating that mistake again. Then we can have the miracle of forgiveness."

Harold B. Lee, *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, 120.
"The miracle of forgiveness is available to all of those who turn from their evil doings and return no more, because the Lord has said in a revelation to us in our day: 'Go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth [meaning again] shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God' (D&C 82:7). Have that in mind, all of you who may be troubled with a burden of sin." Brackets original.

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball*, 27.
"The purging out of sin would be impossible but for the total repentance of the individual and the kind mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ in His atoning sacrifice. Only by these means can man recover, be healed and washed and purged, and still be eligible for the glories of eternity."

Ibid.
"…in recalling the words which Amulek spoke to Zeezrom, Helaman emphasized man's part in obtaining forgiveness—repenting from their sins…He said unto him

that the Lord surely should come to redeem his people, but that he should **not** come to redeem them *in their sins*, but to redeem them *from their sins*."

Ibid., 39.
"There is one crucial test of repentance. This is the abandonment of sin. Providing that a person discontinues his sin with the right motives—because of a growing consciousness of the gravity of sin and a willingness to comply with the laws of the Lord—he is genuinely repenting. This criterion has been set by the Lord: 'By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and *forsake them*.'"

Ibid.
"In other words, it is not real repentance until one has abandoned the error of his way and started on a new path…. The saving power does not extend to him who merely *wants* to change his life. True repentance prods one to action."

Ibid., 43-44.
"…Repentance must involve an all-out, total surrender to the program of the Lord. That transgressor is not fully repentant who neglects his tithing, misses his meetings, breaks the Sabbath, fails in his family prayers, does not sustain the authorities of the Church, breaks the Word of Wisdom, does not love the Lord or his fellowmen…God cannot forgive unless the transgressor shows a true repentance which spreads to all areas of his life…"

Spencer W. **Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 16**.
"And let us not suppose that in calling people to repentance the prophets are concerned only with the more grievous sins such as murder, adultery, stealing, and so on, nor only with those persons who have not accepted the gospel ordinances. All transgressions must be cleansed, all weaknesses must be overcome, before a person can attain perfection and godhood."

Ibid., 117.
"Without repentance there can be no forgiveness, and without forgiveness all the blessings of eternity hang in jeopardy." See also *The Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 2004), p. 40.)

Ibid., 163.
"There is one crucial test of repentance. This is abandonment of the sin" See also *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual: Religion 231 and 232*, p. 40; *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W*. *Kimball*, p. 39.

Ibid.
"Desire Is Not Sufficient. In other words, it is not real repentance until one has abandoned the error of his way and started on a new path. Someone has said that there is only one way to quit a bad habit and that is to stop. The saving

power does not extend to him who merely wants to change his life. True repentance prods one to action."

Ibid., 164.
"Trying Is Not Sufficient. Nor is repentance complete when one merely tries to abandon sin."

Ibid., 210
"Christ became perfect through overcoming. Only as we overcome shall we become perfect and move toward godhood. As I have indicated previously, the time to do this is now, in mortality."

Ibid., 149.
"*There is no royal road to repentance*, no privileged path to forgiveness. Every man must follow the same course whether he be rich or poor, educated or untrained, tall or short, prince or pauper, king or commoner. 'For there is no respect of persons with God.' (Rom. 2:11.) There is only one way. It is a long road spiked with thorns and briars and pitfalls and problems." Italics original. See also *Gospel Principles*, 1997, p. 123).

Ibid., 203.
"Repentance must involve an all-out, total surrender to the program of the Lord. That transgressor is not fully repentant who neglects his tithing, misses his meetings, breaks the Sabbath, fails in his family prayers, does not sustain the authorities of the Church, breaks the Word of Wisdom, does not love the Lord nor his fellowmen. A reforming adulterer who drinks or curses is not repentant. The repenting burglar who has sex play is not ready for forgiveness. God cannot forgive unless the transgressor shows a true repentance which spreads to all areas of his life." See also *The Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 2004), p. 41.

Ibid.
"God cannot forgive unless the transgressor shows a true repentance which spreads to all areas of his life." See also *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual: Religion 231 and 232*, p. 41.

Ibid., 212.
"And incomplete repentance never brought complete forgiveness."

Ibid, 324-325.
"Your Heavenly Father has promised forgiveness upon total repentance and meeting all the requirements, but that forgiveness is not granted merely for the asking. There must be works—many works—and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit.' It depends upon you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries before that happy day when you have the positive assurance

that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes."

Ibid, 333.
"Little reward can be expected for a tiny effort to repent, for the Lord has said that it must be a total repentance 'with all his heart' and the error must be forsaken fully and wholly, mentally as well as physically."

Ibid., 354-355.
"This passage [Alma 13:11-12] indicates an attitude which is basic to the sanctification we should all be seeking, and thus to the repentance which merits forgiveness. It is that the former transgressor must have reached a 'point of no return' to sin wherein there is not merely a renunciation but also a deep abhorrence of the sin where the sin becomes most distasteful to him and where the desire or urge to sin is cleared out of his life" Brackets mine. See also *The Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, p. 78).

Ibid., 360.
"We can hardly be too forceful in reminding people that they cannot sin and be forgiven and then sin again and again and expect repeated forgiveness. The Lord anticipated the weakness of man which would return him to his transgression, and he gave this revelation in warning: And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God. (D&C 82:7)."

Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Reports*, April 1975, 116.
"There can be no forgiveness without real and total repentance, and there can be no repentance without punishment. This is as eternal as is the soul."

Spencer W. Kimball, "The Gospel of Repentance," *Ensign* (October 1982): 5.
"If one neglects his tithing, misses his meetings, breaks the Sabbath, or fails in his prayers and other responsibilities, he is not completely repentant. The Lord knows, as do we, the degree of full and sufficient compliance we make with these fundamental aspects of the law of repentance, which is really God's law of progress and fulfillment."

Ibid.
"The Lord teaches that he cannot forgive people *in* their sins; he can only save them *from* their abandoned sins. The Lord clearly says, 'My blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not.' (D&C 29:17) *Hear* in this instance means to accept and abide his teachings."

Ibid.
“If one neglects his tithing, misses his meetings, breaks the Sabbath, or fails in his prayers and other responsibilities, he is not completely repentant.”

Spencer Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 181.
“And the Lord in our dispensation said: ‘By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will…forsake them. (D&C 58:43)’ The discontinuance must be a permanent one. True repentance does not permit repetition.”

“Forgiveness is not assured if one reverts to early sins. The Lord said: “…go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return…(D&C 82:7)”

Apostles and General Authorities

James Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 112.
“Apostle Orson Pratt has wisely said: ‘It would be of no use for a sinner to confess his sins to God unless he were determined to forsake them…Repentance then is not only a confession of sins, with a sorrowful, contrite heart, but a fixed, settled purpose to refrain from every evil way.’”

James Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 113.
“God has promised forgiveness unto those who truly repent; it is unto such that the advantages of individual salvation, through the atonement of Christ are extended.”

James Talmage, “Break Your Shackles—And Be Free”, 2.
“Repentance, then, involves the recognition and acknowledgement of personal sin, with genuine sorrow therefore, and a resolute determination to seek divine assistance in turning away from sin, and, so far as is possible, to sin no more.”

Francis M. **Lyman, *Conference Reports* (April 1899): 38**.
“There is no forgiveness of sin without repentance. Forgiveness does not come by faith alone, nor by promising that we will do better some time. It is necessary that we should cease sinning and begin to do well.”

Charles W. **Penrose, *“Mormon” Doctrine Plain and Simple*, 10**.
Tears, self-reproaches, lamentations, self-abasement in language or in gesture do not constitute repentance, no matter how loudly they may be indulged in or how conspicuous they may appear, but it is evidenced by forsaking things one knows to be wrong and practicing that which one is satisfied is right.”

Charles W. **Penrose, "Rays of Living Light on the Way of Salvation", 21**.
"It has been shown that faith is the first principle of the Gospel, and repentance – the forsaking of sin, is the second…"

Charles W. **Penrose, *What the "Mormons" Believe*, 4**.
"[Repentance] is, conviction of sin, regret for its commission, and reformation by turning away from it, by ceasing to do evil and beginning and continuing to do well."

LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder,* 25-26.
"One erroneous teaching of many Christian churches is: *By faith alone we are saved*. This false doctrine would relieve man from the responsibility of his acts other than to confess a belief in God, and would teach man that no matter how great the sin, a confession would bring him complete forgiveness and salvation. What the world needs is more preaching of the necessity of abstaining from sin and of living useful and righteous lives, and less preaching of forgiveness of sin. This would then be a different world. The truth is that men must repent of their sins and forsake them before they can expect forgiveness. Even when our sins are forgiven, God cannot reward us for the good we have not done." Italics original.

Bruce R. **McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 295**.
"Complete forgiveness is reserved for those only who turn their whole hearts to the Lord and begin to keep all of his commandments not just those commandments disobeyed in the past, but those in all fields. 'He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven.'"

George Q. **Cannon, *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q*. *Cannon*, 1:156**.
"If we have received a forgiveness of our sins, it is by repenting of them, for we know that there is no remission of sins without repentance."

Richard L. **Evans, *Conference Reports* (April 1970): 16**.
"Many of you would be familiar with President Spencer Kimball's wonderful work on the miracle of forgiveness. I witness to you that God is a loving Father who will forgive and help us find peace and self-respect as we repent and show our sincerity by the lives we live. And there is nothing he asks of us that we cannot do; there is no requirement we cannot keep-if we are willing, if we want to. Repentance is a miracle, if it is sincere."

Marion G. **Romney, *Conference Report* (October 1980): 71**.
"One having forsaken his sins and, by proper confession, cleared his conduct with the Lord, with the people he has offended, and with the Church of Jesus Christ, where necessary, may with full confidence seek the Lord's forgiveness and go forth in newness of life, relying upon the merits of Christ." See also *Ensign,* Nov. 1980, 48; *The Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, 40.)

Robert D. Hales, "Blessings of the Priesthood," *Ensign* (November 1995): 33.
"Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of all who will repent and be baptized through the power of the holy Priesthood."

Bruce C. Hafen, "Beauty for Ashes: The Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Liahona* (April 1997), 41.
"Some of us make repentance too easy, and others make it too hard. Those who make it too easy don't see any big sins in their lives, or they believe that breezy apologies alone are enough. These people should read President Spencer W. Kimball's *The Miracle of Forgiveness,* which reviews many sins of both commission and omission. And while forgiveness is a miracle, it is not won without penitent and strenuous effort."

Boyd K. Packer, "Washed Clean," *Ensign* (May 1997): 10.
"When you meet all of the conditions of repentance, however difficult, you may be forgiven and your transgressions will trouble your mind no more."

Richard G. Scott, "The Path to Peace and Joy," *Ensign* (November 2000): 25.
"There are several vital steps to repentance. Each is essential for complete forgiveness."

Richard G. Scott, "Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind," *Ensign* (November 2004): 16.
"When needed, full repentance will require action on your part. If you are not familiar with the classic steps to repentance, such as confession and abandonment of sin, restitution, obedience, and seeking forgiveness, talk to a bishop or study a source such as President Spencer W. Kimball's masterly work *The Miracle of Forgiveness*."

Robert D. Hales, "The Atonement Can Secure Your Peace and Happiness," *Ensign* (November 2006): 42.
"The demands of justice for broken law can be satisfied through mercy, earned by your continual repentance and obedience to the laws of God. Such repentance and obedience are absolutely essential for the Atonement to work its complete miracle in your life."

Bruce D. Porter, "A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit," *Ensign* (November 2007): 32.
"The Savior's perfect submission to the Eternal Father is the very essence of a broken heart and contrite Spirit…A broken heart and a contrite spirit are also preconditions to repentance (2 Nephi 2:6-7, 2 Corinthians 7:10)… Those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit are willing to do anything and everything that God asks of them, without resistance or resentment. We cease doing things

our way and learn to do them God's way instead. In such a condition of submissiveness, the Atonement can take effect and true repentance can occur."

Claudio D. Zivic, "After All We Can Do," *Ensign* (November 2007): 98.
"Nephi taught us clearly what we ought to do. He said, 'for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23). I believe that the first thing we have to keep in mind in doing 'all we can' is to repent of our sins. We will never be able to reach our divine potential if we remain in our sins."

Jorge F. Zeballos, "Attempting the Impossible," *Ensign* (November 2009): 33.
"As our Father, He is always willing and desirous to forgive our errors and weaknesses and the sins we commit, subject only to total and sincere repentance."

Neil L. Andersen, "Repent…That I May Heal You," *Ensign* (November 2009): 41-42.
"If you are striving and working to repent, you are in the process of repenting… As we honestly confess our sins, restore what we can to the offended, and forsake our sins by keeping the commandments, we are in the process of receiving forgiveness."

Robert D. Hales, *Return*, 119
"But one of the Hallmarks of repentance is forsaking sin."

D. Todd Christofferson, "As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten," *Ensign* (May 2011): 98.
"Consider first of all repentance, the necessary condition for forgiveness and cleansing."

Ibid., 100
"All of us can meet God's high expectations, however great or small our capacity and talent may be. Moroni affirms, "If ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is [God's] grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ" (Moroni 10:32). It is a diligent, devoted effort on our part that calls forth this empowering and enabling grace, an effort that certainly includes submission to God's chastening hand and sincere, unqualified repentance."

C. Scott Grow, "The Miracle of the Atonement," *Ensign* (May 2011): 109.
"With the exception of sons of perdition, the Atonement is available to everyone all the time, no matter how large or small the sin, 'on condition of repentance' (D&C 18:12)… Repent and Forsake your sins…Go to the Bishop if necessary. He is the Lord's messenger of mercy. He will help you as you struggle to become clean through repentance."

***Todd Christofferson*, "The Divine Gift of Repentance," *Ensign* (November 2011): 38.**
"With repentance we can steadily improve in our capacity to live the celestial law, for we recognize that 'he who is not able to abide the law of celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory' (D&C 88:22)."

Ibid, 39.
"Third, repentance means not only abandoning sin but also committing to obedience…For our turning to the Lord to be complete, it must include nothing less than a covenant of obedience to him…Without this covenant, repentance remains incomplete and the remission of sins unattained."

Ibid., 40.
"True repentance is not superficial. The Lord gives two overarching requirements: "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins – behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:42)."

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***Gospel Principles* (1981), 120**.
"Our sincere sorrow should lead us to forsake (stop) our sinning. It does little good to admit that we have sinned if we do not stop doing the evil thing. If we truly repent of our sins, we will do them no more…The Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith: 'By this ye may know if a man repents of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them' (citing D&C 58:43)."

Ibid., 122.
"President Kimball said, 'Repentance means not only to convict yourselves of the horror of the sin, but to confess it, abandon it, and restore to all who have been damaged to the total extent possible; then spend the balance of your lives trying to live the commandments of the Lord so he can eventually pardon you and cleanse you' (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 200)."

Mormon Missionary Discussion F, *Uniform System for Teaching Families*, 36.
"In order to remain forgiven we must never commit the sin again."

Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel, 2-14.
"If we sincerely repent, we turn away from our sins and do them no more. We no longer have any desire to commit the sins."

***True to the Faith*, 70-71**.
"Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can receive forgiveness for our

sins through sincere and complete repentance… 'Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more' (D&C 58:42)."

Ibid., 135.
"Although confession is an essential element of repentance, it is not enough. The Lord has said, 'By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them' (D&C 58:43). Maintain an unyielding, permanent resolve that you will never repeat the transgression."

Ibid., 152.
"Note that you cannot be saved *in your sins*; you cannot receive unconditional salvation simply by declaring your belief in Christ with the understanding that you will inevitably commit sins throughout the rest of your life (see Alma 11:36-37). Through the grace of God, you can be saved *from your sins* (see Helaman 5:10-11). To receive this blessing, you must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, strive to keep the commandments, forsake sin, and renew your repentance and cleansing through the ordinance of the sacrament." Italics original.

***Uniform System for Teaching Investigators*, 55**.
"We repent by no longer sinning."

Gospel Fundamentals, 67.
"Our Father in heaven does not sin, and He does not allow people who sin to live with Him. To live with Him, we must repent of our sins. To repent means to feel sorry for our sins and stop doing them."

***Preparing for Exaltation,* 68**.
"What do we have to do to show we have truly repented? (Confess our sins and forsake them).

Keep Commandments

Presidents/Prophets

Joseph Smith Jr., *Documentary History of the Church* 6:223, February 21, 1844.
"To get salvation we must not only do some things, but everything which God has commanded." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, third ed., 1949), pg. 139.

Joseph Smith Jr., *Times and Seasons*, August 15, 1844.
"So long as a man will not give heed to the commandments, he must abide without salvation." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, third ed., 1949), pg. 142.

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:284.
"There is not one requirement of the Lord that is non-essential; every requirement that He has made of us is essential to our perfection and sanctification, to prepare us to enjoy celestial glory."

John Taylor, *Mediation and Atonement*, 175.
"Hence, through His atonement, believers in Christ, and those who obey His law, partake of His glory and exaltation, and are inheritors of the Godhead; whilst those who do not obey His law although resurrected cannot inherit this exaltation; they are raised from the dead, but cannot inherit a celestial glory without being obedient to a celestial law, and thus we come again to a scripture quoted before." See also *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: John Taylor*, 51.

Wilford Woodruff, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, 70-71.
"Jesus has died to redeem all men; but in order that they may be benefitted by His death, and that His blood may cleanse them from actual sin committed in the flesh, they must abide by the law of the gospel…and in order to obtain salvation we must be obedient and faithful to the precepts of the gospel."

Ibid., 71.
"If I ever obtain a full salvation it will be by my keeping the laws of God."

Heber J. Grant, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant*, 29.
"We are in a school, fitting, qualifying, and preparing ourselves that we may be worthy and capable of going back and dwelling in the presence of our Heavenly Father, and the man who claims that he knows the gospel is true and then does not live it, does not keep the commandments of God. Such a man will never attain to that strength, to that power, to that eminence, and to that capacity in the Church and the Kingdom of God that he would attain if he obeyed the laws of God." See also *Gospel Standards*, 40.

Ibid., 31.
"I say to you Latter-day Saints, that the pearl of great price is life eternal. God has told us that the greatest of all gifts He can bestow upon man is life eternal (see D&C 14:7). We are laboring for that greatest gifts, and it will be ours if we keep the commandments of God. But it will not profit us merely to make professions and to proclaim to the ends of the earth that this is the gospel, but it will profit us if we do the will of God." See also *Gospel Standards*, Jan. 1900, 192.

Ibid., 38.
If you want to know how to be saved, I can tell you; it is by keeping the commandments of God. No power on earth, no power beneath the earth, will ever prevent you or me or any Latter-day Saint from being saved, except ourselves. We are the architects of our lives, not only of the lives here, but the lives to come in the eternity. We ourselves are able to perform every duty and obligation that God has required of men. No commandment was ever given to us but that God has given us the power to keep that commandment. If we fail, we, and we alone, are responsible for the failure, because God endows His servants, from the President of the Church down to the humblest member, with all the ability, all the knowledge, all the power that is necessary, faithfully, diligently, and properly to discharge every duty and every obligation that rests upon them, and we, and we alone, will have to answer if we fail in this regard."

Heber J. **Grant, Gospel Standards (1976), 6.**
"Of what good is our faith, our repentance, our baptism, and all the sacred ordinances of the gospel by which we have been made ready to receive the blessings of the Lord if we fail, on our part, to keep the commandments? All that we expect, or all that we are promised, is predicated on our own actions, and if we fail to act, or to do the work which God has required of us, we are little better than those who have not received the principles and ordinances of the gospel. We have only started, and when we rest there, we are not following our faith by our works, and are under condemnation; our salvation is not attained.

George Albert Smith, ***The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith*, 24.**
"We believe that Jesus of Nazareth will come to dwell with those who are worthy of celestial glory."

Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 206.
"To enter the *celestial* and obtain exaltation it is necessary that the *whole law be kept*." Italics original.

Ibid.
"The word of the Lord is that they of the celestial world are those sanctified from all unrighteousness. (D. C. 88:21, cf. verse 18) To become sanctified there are certain definite covenants we must keep in faithfulness, living by 'every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.' 'They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, ****That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins,* and received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power."

Ibid., 207.
"Do you desire to enter into the celestial Kingdom and receive eternal life? Then be willing to keep all of the commandments the Lord may give you."

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* Vol. II, 6.
"*But to be exalted one must keep the whole law*… to receive the exaltation of the righteous, in other words eternal life, the commandments of the Lord must be kept in *all* things." Italics original.

Ibid., 41-42.
"*Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are those who are members of the Church of the Firstborn*; in other words, those who keep all the commandments of the Lord (D&C 76:54, 67, 71, 94-95, 102; 77:11; 78:21; 88:5; 93:22). There will be many who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who shall *never* become members of the Church of the Firstborn. The higher ordinances in the temple of God pertain to exaltation in the celestial kingdom…In order to receive this blessing, one must keep the *full law*, must abide the law by which that kingdom is governed; for 'He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory' (D&C 88:22)."

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball*, 29.
"His suffering before and on the cross and his great sacrifice can mean little or nothing to us unless we live his commandments."

Ibid., 43.
"The scripture is most precise. First, one repents. Having gained that ground he then must live the commandments of the Lord to retain his vantage point. This is necessary to secure complete forgiveness…" See also *Gospel Principles* [2009], 112.

Spencer Kimball, "First Presidency Message: The Gospel of Repentance," *Ensign* (October 1982).
"When one seeks to bring his life into full conformity with our Heavenly Father's teachings, then his life of good works is evidence of his repentance (quoting D&C 1:31-32; 6:13)."

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 208-209.
"This progress toward eternal life is a matter of achieving perfection. Living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins and assures one of exaltation through that perfection which comes by complying with the formula the Lord gave us." See also *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 1979, p. 3.

James Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 112.
"But no person can truthfully profess faith in Christ and refuse to obey His commandments; therefore obedience is essential to remission of sin; and the truly repentant sinner will eagerly seek to learn what is required of him."

Bruce R. **McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, 242**.
"All must repent to be free. All must obey to gain gospel blessings. All must keep the commandments to merit mercy.

Milton R. **Hunter, *Conference Reports* (April 1960): 118**.
"Furthermore, I bear witness that Jesus Christ not only through his atonement gave us immortality, but also through the gospel plan of salvation provided a means whereby we may gain eternal life. If we are faithful in keeping God's commandments, being sufficiently obedient in all things, we shall rise in the resurrection and return to the presence of the Father and the Son and receive a glorious exaltation or eternal life."

Mark E. Petersen, *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual,* p. 48.
"Half obedience will be rejected as readily as full violation, and maybe quicker, for half rejection and half acceptance is but a sham, an admission of lack of character, a lack of love for Him. It is actually an effort to live both sides of the line."

Jeffrey R. **Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 1997, 208, 218**.
"Our desire, willingness, and effort to keep God's commandments, which are the terms of our probation, are essential to Christ's willingness to take our case and to the Father's merciful judgment in the end."

"While all members of the human family are freely and universally given reprieve from Adam's transgression through no effort of their own, they are not given reprieve from their own sins unless they follow the commandments of Christ"

Jorge F. **Zeballos, "Attempting the Impossible," *Ensign* (November 2009): 33**.
"The Lord revealed to the prophet Joseph Smith the following: 'And if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God' (D&C 14:7). This divine promise is possible to achieve."

Jorge F. **Zeballos, "Attempting the Impossible," *Ensign* (November 2009): 33**.

"God will not require more than the best we can give because that would not be just, but neither can He accept less than that because that would not be just either."

Cicil O. Samuelson Jr., "Testimony," *Ensign* (May 2011): *40*.
"First, who is entitled to have a testimony? Everyone who is willing to pay the price – meaning keep the commandments – may have a testimony…The Scriptures warn that transgressing or breaking the commandments of God can result in the loss of the Spirit and even to one denying the testimony he or she once possessed (see D&C 42:23)."

Robert D. Hales, *Return, 2010, 421*.
"For the full blessings of the Atonement to take effect in our lives and allow us to return to live with our Heavenly Father, we must repent of our sins and be faithful in obeying the commandments of God."

Dallin H. Oaks, "Fundamental to Our Faith," *Ensign* (January 2011): 27.
"God's love is so great that He requires His children to obey His laws because only through that obedience can they progress toward the eternal destiny He desires for them."

Dallin H. Oaks, "Teachings of Jesus," Ensign (November 2011): 93.
"And so we understand that the Atonement of Jesus Christ gives us the opportunity to overcome the spiritual death that results from sin and, through making and keeping sacred covenants, to have the blessings of eternal life."

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***True to the Faith*, 135.**
"Full obedience brings the complete power of the gospel into your life, including increased strength to overcome your weaknesses. This obedience includes actions you might not initially consider part of repentance, such as attending meetings, paying tithing, giving service, and forgiving others. The Lord promised, 'He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven' (D&C 1:32)."

***Gospel Principles* (1981), 121-122.**
"To make our repentance complete we must always keep the commandments of the Lord (see D&C 1:32). A person is not fully repentant who does not pay his tithes or does not keep the Sabbath day holy or refuses to obey the Word of Wisdom. He is not repentant if he does not sustain the authorities of the Church

and does not love the Lord or his fellowmen. A man who fails to have his family prayers and who is unkind to his family and others is surely not repentant."

***Ibid.,* 291-292**.
"There are specific ordinances we must have received to be exalted…In addition to the required ordinances, there are also many laws we have to obey to qualify for exaltation…In other words, each person must endure in faithfulness, keeping all the Lord's commandments until the end of his life on earth."

Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel (1986), 2-16.
"Through the ordinance of baptism, we enter a covenant (or agreement) with God. We promise to accept Christ, become his followers, and keep his commandments to the end. Our Heavenly Father promises that our sins will be forgiven if we keep our part of the covenant."

Insufficiency of Christ's Sacrifice

Presidents/Prophets

Brigham Young, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young*, 32.
"The Lord has revealed to us a plan by which we may be saved both here and hereafter. God has done everything we could ask, and more than we could ask. The errand of Jesus to earth was to bring his brethren and his sisters back into the presence of the Father; he has done his part of the work, and it remains for us to do ours. There is not one thing that the Lord could do for the salvation of the human family that he has neglected to do; and it remains for children of men to receive the truth or reject it; all that can be accomplished for their salvation, independent of them, has been accomplished in and by the Savior…."

Ibid., 63.
"However much we may profess attachment to God and his cause we are not entitled to the blessings and privileges of his kingdom until we become citizens therein. How can we do this? By repenting of our sins, and obeying the requirements of the Gospel of the Son of God which has been delivered to us. Hundreds and thousands of people have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and repented of their sins, and have had the Holy Spirit to witness unto them that God is love, that they loved him and that he loved them, and yet they are not in his

Kingdom. They have not complied with the necessary requirements, they have not entered in at the door."

Wilford Woodruff, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, 72.
"I have heard many men say no ordinances are necessary, that belief only in the Lord Jesus Christ is necessary to be saved. I have not learned that myself from any revelation of God to man, either ancient or modern."

"There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it; and the judgments of the Almighty will come, sooner or later, and every man and woman will have to atone for breaking their covenants." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, third ed., 1949), pg. 51.

Heber J. Grant, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant*, 29.
"The Lord, knowing what is best for you and for me and for every individual, has given to us laws, which, if we obey, will make us more Godlike, will fit and qualify and prepare us to go back and dwell in the presence of our Heavenly father and to receive the plaudit:" "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."(Matt. 25:21) "That is what we are laboring for."

George Albert Smith, Conference Report (October 1933), 25.
"The beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that it makes us equal in as far as we keep the commandments of the Lord. In as far as we observe to keep the laws of the Church we have equal opportunities for exaltation." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, third ed., 1949), pg. 65.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions,* 5:8.
"Notwithstanding this universal restoration, the inhabitants of the earth will be rewarded according to their works. Some will receive the exaltation in the kingdom of God to become gods themselves and have blessings of eternal increase. Some will be assigned to the terrestrial kingdom to remain separately and singly forever, and some will be cast out into 'outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.'"

David O. McKay, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay*, 211.
"Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World, has given us the means whereby man may obtain eternal happiness and peace in the Kingdom of our Father, but man must work out his own salvation through obedience to the eternal principles and ordinances of the gospel."

David O. **McKay, *Gospel Ideals (1953), 8***.
"The Fallacy that Jesus has done all for us, and live as we may, if on our deathbed, we only believe, we shall be saved in his glorious presence, is most pernicious. Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, has given us the means whereby man may obtain eternal happiness and peace in the kingdom of our Father, but man must work out his own salvation through obedience to the eternal principles and ordinances of the gospel.

For centuries men have been blinded by the false teaching of 'belief alone is sufficient'; and today there is manifest on every hand the sorry plight into which this and other perverse doctrines have thrown the pseudo-Christian sects. The world is in sore need at the present time of the gospel of individual effort—the gospel of faith and works. He who will not grasp this means provided him, will sink beneath the waves of sin and falsehood."

"It is the height of folly for men to try to persuade themselves that Christ has done everything for them, that he has thrown a rope around them, as it were, and will pull them to safety in spite of themselves."

Joseph F. **Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (1905), 55**.
"… man may commit certain grievous sins – according to his light and knowledge – that will place him beyond the reach of the atoning blood of Christ. If *then* he would be saved he must make sacrifice of his own life to atone – so far as his power lies – for that sin, for the blood of Christ alone under certain circumstances will not avail."

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. **II, 43**.
"This is the gospel of merit. Every man shall receive that which he is entitled to receive. Every soul shall be blessed according to the diligence, willingness and integrity put forth in the service of the Lord. The man who will not keep his commandments, the Lord will not exalt…*In order to obtain the exaltation we must accept the gospel and all its covenants; and take upon us the obligations which the Lord has offered; and walk in the light and the understanding of the truth; and 'live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God' (citing D&C 84:44)."* Italics original.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:135-136.
"*Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressors beyond the power of the atonement of Christ*. *If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent*. *Therefore their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone, as far as possible, in their behalf*. This is scriptural doctrine, and is taught in all the standard works of the Church. The

doctrine was established in the beginning, that 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, *by man shall his blood be shed*; for man shall not shed the blood of man. For a commandment I give, that every man's brother shall preserve the life of man, for in mine own image have I made man.'" Italics original.

Spencer W. **Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 206**.
"One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation" See also The *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122,* 1996, p. 36.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 183.
"A pleading sinner must also forgive all people of all offenses committed against himself. The Lord is under no obligation to forgive us unless our hearts are fully purged of all hate, bitterness, and accusations against others."

Ezra Taft Benson, "Think on Christ," *Brigham Young University 1983-84 Fireside and Devotional Speeches,* 12.
"[Jesus Christ] worked our the grate atoning sacrifice so we could have a fullness of joy and be exalted in accordance with His grace and our repentance and righteousness."

Thomas S. **Monson, "The Holy Temple – a Beacon to the World**." ***Ensign* (November 2011): 92-93**.
"There are never too many miles to travel, too many obstacles to overcome, or too much discomfort to endure. They understand that the saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship and to be endowed with blessings and power from on high are worth every sacrifice and every effort…Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you have not obtained everything the Church has to offer."

Apostles/General Authorities

Charles W. **Penrose, "Rays of Living Light on the Way of Salvation," 8, 19**.
"The tenor of [Romans] is to the effect that the law of Moses is insufficient; that 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.' Thus justification and redemption come through the atonement made by Christ, and that faith in him which includes belief in his teachings and obedience to his commands, is the one way of salvation."

"The idea that people may sin against God and against humanity, and by mere belief in the merits of the Savior, be absolved from all the consequences of their guilt, is one of the greatest of the many absurdities which have been grafted by the hand of man upon the tree of religion."

Bruce R. McConkie, *Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, 77.
"The blood of Christ was shed as a free gift of wondrous grace, but the Saints are cleansed by the blood after they keep the commandments."

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 408.
"What then is the law of justification? It is simply this: 'All covenants, contracts, bond, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations' (D&C 132:7), in which men must abide to be saved and exalted, must be entered into and performed in righteousness so that the Holy Spirit can justify the candidate for salvation in what has been done."

Bruce R. McConkie, "What Think Ye of Salvation," *Brigham Young University 1983-84 Fireside and Devotional Speeches,* 48.
"The Blood of Christ was shed as a free gift of wondrous grace, but the Saints are cleansed by the blood after they keep the commandments."

Ibid., 49.
"As with the proposal of Lucifer in the pre-existence to save all mankind, so with the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, without works, as it is taught in modern Christendom – both concepts are false. There is no salvation in either of them. They both come from the same source; they are not of God."

A. Theodore Tuttle, "The Atonement and Our Part in It," *Brigham Young University 1983-84 Fireside and Devotional Speeches,* 42.
"No single principle or ordinance will save you. It requires all these – and more!"

Boyd K. Packer, "Washed Clean," *Ensign* (May 1997).
"Generally we understand that, conditioned upon repentance, the ordinance of baptism washes our sins away."

Robert E. Wells, *We are Christians Because…, 15-16.*
"In some miraculous way He – as the only sinless being on earth, as the Only Begotten Son of God the Father on earth, and as the one chosen and ordained before the foundation of the earth to be the Savior and Redeemer – paid the debt to satisfy justice for my sins, for your sins, for the sins of everyone. But there is an agreement made between Christ and us, and unless we live up to it, His atonement does not apply to us…The effect of Christ's sacrifice is applicable to our sins only if we do what He has asked us to do. He wants us to obey all His laws and ordinances. If we do not obey, we have no promise. He has said, 'I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.' (D&C 82:10)"

Dallin H. Oaks, "Fundamental to our Faith," Ensign (January 2011): 25.
"We were placed on earth to acquire a physical body and – through the Atonement of Jesus Christ an by obedience to the laws and ordinance of His gospel – to qualify for the glorified celestial condition and relationships that are called exaltation or eternal life."

Ibid., 26.
"We affirm that marriage is necessary for the accomplishment of God's plan to provide the approved setting for mortal birth and to prepare family members for eternal life."

Ibid. 27.
"Thus, in the final judgment, we will all be assigned to the kingdom of glory that is commensurate with our obedience to His law."

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***Gospel Principles*, (1981) 68-69**.
"Christ did his part to atone for our sins. Each of us must repent and obey to make Christ's atonement effective in our lives."

***True to the Faith*, 19**.
"The Savior has declared that eternal life is 'the greatest of all the gifts of God' (D&C 14:7)…To receive this gift, we must meet certain conditions. We must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and endure faithfully to the end. We must receive the ordinances of salvation: baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (for men), and the temple endowment and marriage sealing. By receiving these ordinances and keeping the associated covenants, we come unto Christ and ultimately receive the gift of eternal life."

***True to the Faith*, 153**.
"If we use the word *salvation* to mean eternal life, none of us can say that we have been saved in mortality. That glorious gift can only come after the Final Judgment."

***Preach My Gospel*, 61**.
"The Savior satisfied the demands of justice for those who repent of their sins and endeavor to keep all of His commandments when He stood in our place and suffered the penalty for our sins. This act is called the Atonement… However, Jesus did not eliminate our personal responsibility. He forgives our sins when we accept Him, repent, and obey His commandments. Through the Atonement and

living the gospel we become worthy to enter the presence of our Heavenly Father permanently."

Uniform System for Teachings the Gospel (1986), 6.
"The atonement of Christ removes all obstacles from our path if we accept him and follow his perfect example."

Bi-Dimensional Nature of the Atonement

Presidents/Prophets

John Taylor, *The Mediation and the Atonement*, 179.
"How, and in what manner are men benefited by the atonement?...In this, that the atonement, having restored man to his former position before the Lord, has placed him in a position and made it possible for him to obtain that exaltation and glory which it would have been impossible for him to have received without it…" See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow, 3rd ed. (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, 1949), pg. 146.

Wilford Woodruff, *Millennial Star*, 51:659, September 1, 1889.
"When men are called upon to repent of their sins, the call has reference to their own individual sins, not to Adam's transgressions. What is called original sin was atoned for through the death of Christ, irrespective of any action on the part of man; also man's individual sin was atoned for by the same sacrifice, but on condition of his obedience to the gospel plan of salvation when proclaimed in his hearing." See also *Latter Day Prophets Speak*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, third ed., 1949), pg. 149.

Wilford Woodruff, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, 72.
"When men are called upon to repent of their sins, the call has reference to their own individual sins, not to Adam's transgressions. What is called the original sin was atoned for through the death of Christ irrespective of any action on the part of man; also man's individual sin was atoned for by the same sacrifice, but on condition of his obedience to the gospel plan of salvation when proclaimed in his hearing."

Joseph F. Smith, ***Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (1905), 55**.
"This salvation is two-fold; General, -- that which comes to all men irrespective of

a belief in Christ – and Individual, -- that which man merits through his own acts through life and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

Charles W. Penrose, *"Mormon" Doctrine Plain and Simple* (1917), 11.
"Mankind had no part in the commission of the original sin, they perform nothing in the redemption there from. Its effects came though no acts of theirs; those effects will be removed without anything they may do. No conditions are required as preliminaries to redemption from original sin; it was committed by Adam, it was atoned for by Jesus Christ. But as each person is guilty of his own sins, so he must comply with the conditions which will entitle him to the full benefits of Christ's atonement for his own sins."

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* Vol. II, 10.
"Redemption from the original sin is without faith or works; redemption from our own sins is given through faith and works. *Both are the gifts of free grace*; but while one is a gift *forced* upon us unconditionally, the other is a gift merely *offered* to us conditionally. The redemption of the one is *compulsory*; the reception of the other is *voluntary*. Man cannot, by any possible act, prevent hi redemption from the fall; but he can utterly refuse and prevent his redemption from the penalty of his own sins." Italics original.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Religious Truths Defined*, 119.
"Conditional redemption or individual salvation can only be accomplished by faith, repentance and baptism, laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and obedience to all the principles of the gospel."

Ibid., 120.
"Man had no part in Adam's transgression; therefore he is redeemed and not accountable. Yet man is responsible for individual sins committed through a knowledge of good and evil. The atonement of Christ only absolves man from individual sins on obedience to the principles of the gospel."

Joseph Fielding Smith*, Answers to Gospel Questions,* 3:179.
"The atonement of Jesus Christ was of two-fold nature. First: By his death upon the cross he redeemed all mankind from death. Second: He redeems all mankind from sin on condition of faith in God, repentance from all sin, and baptism by immersion—a burial in water—for the remission of their sins."

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball*, 29.
"The savior came 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39). His birth, death, and resurrection brought about the first. But we must join our efforts with his to bring about the second, to attain eternal life."

Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," *Ensign* (November 1986): 50-51.

"I believe in the grace of God made manifest through His sacrifice and redemption, and I believe that through His atonement, without any price on our part, each of us is offered the gift of resurrection from the dead. I believe further that through that sacrifice there is extended to every man and woman, every son and daughter of God, the opportunity for eternal life and exaltation in our Father's kingdom, as we hearken and obey His commandments."

Apostles/General Authorities

Robert E. Wells, *We Are Christians Because…*, 14-15.
"When we speak of salvation, we are talking of two separate and distinct kinds of salvation: 1) Salvation from death, which is unconditional and universal… 2) Salvation from our own sins, which is conditional and individual… This [second] element of salvation is predicated upon individual and personal efforts toward faith in Jesus Christ, repentance of sins, and continued righteous efforts in Christian living until the very end of our mortal life."

A. Theodore Tuttle, "The Atonement and Our Part in It," *Brigham Young University 1983-84 Fireside and Devotional Speeches,* 42.
"All of us know what many of the people of the world do know – that immortality and eternal life are two different things. The resurrection of the Master brought about the resurrection of every creature. All people will live again whether they have faith in Him or whether they do not. Eternal life is the quality of existence in the presence of our Heavenly Father which comes upon conditions we have explained. We must earn it by obedience."

Marrion G. Romney, "Jesus – Savior and Redeemer," *1978 Devotional Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional and Fireside Addresses,* 10-11.
"Adam and Eve were responsible for death. Jesus brought about universal resurrection. In this respect, he was and is our Savior. The fact that all men are to be resurrected, regardless of their conduct, does not, however, mean that all men shall obtain eternal life in the Celestial Kingdom. There are many kingdoms to which resurrected beings will be assigned – some of glory and some of less than glory. The kingdoms to which they will go will be determined by how well they, while in mortality, do the things the Lord their God commands them… Men do not, however, get the benefit of Christ's atonement for their sins unconditionally. They obtain the benefit of Christ's victory over the grave unconditionally because they were not in any way responsible for the transgression which brought death. On the other hand, they are responsible for their own sins, and therefore, required to do all they can do by way of atoning for them."

Tad Callister, *The Infinite Atonement*, 46.
"The Atonement corrects the first spiritual death for all men without any effort on their own, and understandably so, for they were in no way its cause. The Atonement corrects the second spiritual death on an individual basis for those who repent, since each of us who has sinned must individually contribute to our own redemption, 'For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23).

Russell M. Nelson, "Divine Love," *Ensign*, February 2003, 24.
"Thanks to the Atonement, the gift of immortality is *unconditional*. The greater gift of eternal life, however, is *conditional*. In order to qualify, one must deny oneself of ungodliness and honor the ordinances and covenants of the temple." Italics original.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* (1997), 213-218.
"The universal, infinite, and unconditional aspects of the atonement of Jesus Christ are several. They include his ransom for Adam's original transgression so that no member of the human family is held responsible for it. Another unconditional, universal gift is the resurrection from the dead of every man, woman, and child who lives, has ever lived, or will ever live on earth. Thus the Atonement is universal in that it saves the entire human family from the bondage of physical death. It is also infinite in its impact and efficacy in making redemption possible for all, reaching back to the beginning of time and forward throughout eternity…"

"…other aspects of the Atonement are conditional, requiring such effort as 'repentance and faith on the name of the Lord God Omnipotent...' While all members of the human family are freely and universally given reprieve from Adam's transgression through no effort of their own, they are not given reprieve from their own sins unless they follow the commandments of Christ…There are principles of the gospel that the accountable must follow and ordinances of the gospel that they must obtain. "

Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Ensign* (March 2008): 35.

"Some gifts coming from the Atonement are universal, infinite, and unconditional. These include His ransom for Adam's original transgression so that no member of the human family is held responsible for that sin."

Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life's Experiences,* 7.
"Somehow, through his sinless life, his genetic nature as the Only Begotten of the Father, and his willingness to drink the bitter cup of justice, the Lord Jesus Christ was able to atone *unconditionally* for the original sin of Adam and Eve and for the

physical death, and to atone *conditionally* for the personal sins of all mankind." Italics original.

Bruce C. Hafen, "The Atonement: All for All," *Ensign* (May 2004): 97.
"For example, some of our friends can't see how our Atonement beliefs relate to our beliefs about becoming more like our Heavenly Father. Others *mistakenly* think our Church is moving toward an understanding of the relationship between grace and works that draws on Protestant teachings. Such misconceptions prompt me to consider today the Restoration's unique Atonement doctrine."

Jeffrey R. Holland, "None Were With Him," in *Ensign* (November 2007): 87.
"With all the conviction of my soul I testify that [Jesus] *did* please His Father perfectly and that a perfect Father did *not* forsake His Son in that hour. Indeed, it is my personal belief that in all of Christ's mortal ministry the Father may never have been closer to His Son than in these agonizing final moments of suffering."

Jorge F. Zeballos, "Attempting the Impossible," in *Ensign* (November 2009): 33.
"Salvation and eternal life would not be possible if it were not for the Atonement, brought about by our Savior, to whom we owe everything. But in order for these supreme blessings to be effective in our lives, we should first do our part, 'for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23). Let us with faith, enthusiasm, dedication, responsibility, and love do all that is within our reach, and we will be doing all that is possible to achieve the impossible…"

Robert D. Hales, *Return*, 2010, 421.
"The redemptive blessings of repentance and forgiveness are an important part of the Atonement, but they are conditional upon our faithful obeying the commandments and the ordinances of God."

Dallin H. Oaks, "Fundamental to Our Faith," *Ensign* (January 2011): 25.
"Because of His Resurrection, all who have ever lived will be raised from the dead. He is the Savior, whose atoning sacrifice opens the door for us to be forgiven of our personal sins so that we can be cleansed to return to the presence of God our Eternal Father."

Legrand R. Curtis Jr., "Redemption," *Ensign* (November 2011): 36.
"The effects of this redemption include the overcoming of physical death for all of God's children. That is, temporal death is overcome, and all will be resurrected. Another aspect of this redemption by Christ is the victory over spiritual death. Through His suffering and death, Christ paid for the sins of all mankind on condition of individual repentance."

***Gospel Principles* (1981), 68**.
"Although all mankind will be resurrected with a body of flesh and bone, only those who accept Christ's atonement will be saved from spiritual death. We accept Christ's atonement by repenting of our sins, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and obeying all of the commandments."

***True to the Faith*, 18**.
"Although we are redeemed unconditionally from the universal effects of the fall, we are accountable for our own sins. But we can be forgiven and cleansed from the stain of sin if we 'apply the atoning blood of Christ' (Mosiah 4:2). We must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent, be baptized for the remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Lowell L. Bennion, *An Introduction to The Gospel* (1959), 146-147.
"Salvation from the grave, the resurrection, comes to us through the grace of Christ. It comes to all men irrespective of merit. Here we see grace operative quite independent of human effort. Man, as far as we know, is wholly dependent on God for his resurrection, as he was for his creation. Yet, when it comes to the problem of overcoming ignorance and sin and thereby developing an intelligent, moral, and spiritual life, grace alone will not suffice."

APPENDIX 2

GENERAL CONFERENCE QUOTATIONS

2 Nephi 25:23

2 Nephi 25:23 - *For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do*.

D. Todd Christofferson, "The Divine Gift of Repentance," *Ensign* (November 2011): 39.
"It would mock the Savior's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross for us to expect that He should transform us into angelic beings with no real effort on our part. Rather, we seek His grace to complement and reward our most diligent efforts (see 2 Nephi 25:23)."

Jorge F. Zeballos, "Attempting the Impossible," *Ensign* (November 2009): 33–34.
"Salvation and eternal life would not be possible if it were not for the Atonement, brought about by our Savior, to whom we owe everything. But in order for these supreme blessings to be effective in our lives, we should first do our part, 'for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.'"

Claudio D. Zivic, "After All We Can Do," *Ensign* (November 2007): 98–99.
"Nephi taught us clearly what we ought to do. He said, 'For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.'"

"I believe that the first thing we have to keep in mind in doing 'all we can' is to repent of our sins. We will never be able to reach our divine potential if we remain in our sins."

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Point of Safe Return," *Ensign* (May 2007): 99–101.
"It is not repentance per se that saves man. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that saves us. It is not by our sincere and honest change of behavior alone that we are saved, but 'by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23). True repentance, however, is the condition required so that God's forgiveness

can come into our lives…Repentance means a change of mind and heart—we stop doing things that are wrong, and we start doing things that are right."

Anthony D. Perkins, "'The Great and Wonderful Love'," *Ensign* (November 2006): 76.
"Yet Alma's repentance was so complete and Christ's Atonement so infinite that Alma became a prophet and was promised eternal life. As you do your best to be obedient and repentant, you too can receive a place in the celestial kingdom through the Atonement and grace of Jesus Christ."

Richard G. Scott, "The Atonement Can Secure Your Peace and Happiness," *Ensign* (November 2006): 40–42.
"His *mercy* pays our debt to justice when we repent and obey Him. Since with even our best efforts to obey His teachings we will still fall short, because of His *grace* we will be 'saved, after all we can do.'"

Bruce C. Hafen, "The Atonement: All for All," *Ensign* (May 2004): 97.
"But growth means growing pains. It also means learning from our mistakes in a continual process made possible by the Savior's grace, which He extends both during and *'after all we can do*.'

If we must give all that we have, then our giving only *almost* everything is not enough. If we *almost* keep the commandments, we *almost* receive the blessings.

So we must willingly give everything, because God Himself can't make us grow against our will and without our full participation. Yet even when we utterly spend ourselves, we lack the power to create the perfection only God can complete. Our *all* by itself is still only *almost* enough—until it is finished by the *all* of Him who is the 'finisher of our faith.' At that point, our imperfect but consecrated *almost* is enough."

Dennis E. Simmons, "But If Not …," *Ensig*n (May 2004): 73.
"What does the Lord expect of us with respect to our challenges? He expects us to do all we can do. He does the rest. Nephi said, 'For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.'"

James E. Faust, "The Atonement: Our Greatest Hope," *Ensign* (November 2001): 18.
"Our salvation depends on believing in and accepting the Atonement. 1 [See Mosiah 4:6–7] Such acceptance requires a continual effort to understand it more fully. The Atonement advances our mortal course of learning by making it possible for our natures to become perfect. 2 [See Moro. 10:32] All of us have sinned and need to repent to fully pay *our* part of the debt. When we sincerely repent, the Savior's magnificent Atonement pays the *rest* of that debt."

Ibid.
“Many people think they need only confess that Jesus is the Christ and then they are saved by grace alone. We cannot be saved by grace alone, ‘for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after* all we can do.’”

Dallin H. **Oaks, “Have You Been Saved?,” *Ensign* (May 1998): 55**.
“Some Christians accuse Latter-day Saints who give this answer of denying the grace of God through claiming they can earn their own salvation. We answer this accusation with the words of two Book of Mormon prophets. Nephi taught, ‘For we labor diligently … to persuade our children … to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do’ (2 Ne. 25:23). And what is ‘all we can do’? It surely includes repentance (see Alma 24:11) and baptism, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. Moroni pleaded, ‘Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ’ (Moro. 10:32).”

“We are not saved *in* our sins, as by being unconditionally saved through confessing Christ and then, inevitably, committing sins in our remaining lives (see Alma 11:36–37). We are saved *from* our sins (see Hel. 5:10) by a weekly renewal of our repentance and cleansing through the grace of God and His blessed plan of salvation (see 3 Ne. 9:20–22).”

Richard G. **Scott, “Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer,” *Ensign* (May 1997): 53**.
“His *mercy* pays our debt to justice when we repent and obey Him. Even with our best efforts to obey His teachings we will still fall short, yet because of His *grace* we will be saved ‘after all we can do.’”

Boyd K. **Packer, “The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,” *Ensign* (November 1995): 18**.
“The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few who defect to perdition after having known a fullness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness.”

“’Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ That is, Isaiah continued, ‘if ye be willing and obedient.’ 9 [Isa. 1:18–19]. Even that grace of God promised in the scriptures comes only “after all we can do.”

Ronald E. **Poelman, “Divine Forgiveness,” *Ensign* (November 1993): 84**.
“The Lord’s gift of forgiveness, however, is not complete until it is accepted. True and complete repentance is a process by which we may become reconciled with

God and accept the divine gift of forgiveness. In the words of Nephi, 'It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.'"

Gene R. Cook, "Receiving Divine Assistance through the Grace of the Lord," *Ensign* (May 1993): 79.
"Truly did Paul teach, 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.' (Eph. 2:8–9.) Yes, works alone cannot bring that divine gift, but they are a key condition upon which the gift is received. (See 2 Ne. 10:23–25.) 'For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.' (2 Ne. 25:23)."

"Thus, unless one has done all in his own power, he cannot expect the grace of God to be manifest."

Robert L. Backman, "Jesus the Christ," *Ensign* (November 1991): 8.
"That is what the gospel is all about. Without him, without his intervention in our behalf, we would be helpless in the face of Adam's transgression. We are indeed saved by grace 'through faith,' (see Eph. 2:8) or as Nephi wrote, 'It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.'"

Dallin H. Oaks, "'What Think Ye of Christ?'," *Ensign* (November 1991): 65.
"We can forget that keeping the commandments, which is necessary, is not sufficient. As Nephi said, we must labor diligently to persuade everyone 'to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.'"

Marion G. Romney, "Fundamental Welfare Services," *Ensign* (May 1979): 94. "Salvation is an individual matter. There will be no mass salvation. Some have mistakenly concluded from Paul's statement—'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works' (Eph. 2:8–9)—some have erroneously concluded from this statement that works are not necessary."

"The truth was spoken by Nephi when he said, 'We are saved [by grace], after all we can do' (2 Ne. 25:23)."

"It will require maximum effort for us to bring ourselves within the reach of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ so that we can be saved."

Marion G. Romney, "'In Mine Own Way'," *Ensign* (November 1976): 123.
"Paul's statement, 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast' (Eph. 2:8–9), has been misunderstood. Some have interpreted it to mean that works are not necessary. This is an erroneous conclusion."

“The truth is that we are saved by grace only after all we ourselves can do. (See 2 Ne. 25:23.) There will be no government dole which can get us through the pearly gates. Nor will anybody go into the celestial kingdom who wants to go there on the works of someone else. Every man must go through on his own merits. We might just as well learn this here and now.”

Theodore M. Burton, “Salvation and Exaltation,” *Ensign* (July 1972): 78.
“The true value of the sacrifice of Christ means much more than this general salvation which comes to all mankind. There is an additional salvation that God has planned for his children. This additional salvation is an individual salvation and is conditioned not only upon grace, but also upon obedience to gospel law. One of the prophets in the Book of Mormon explained why he and his associates were so concerned about teaching more about Jesus Christ, as he wrote: ‘For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do’ (2 Ne. 25:23).”

“That full reconciliation to God is extremely important to me. It is the idea of a personal atonement or reconciliation that can bring me back into the presence of God as one of his covenant sons that appeals to me. That kind of conditional salvation I call exaltation.”

“Exaltation comes as a gift from God, dependent upon my obedience to God’s law. No works I do solely of my own power can bring this to pass. Only by the grace of God has this course been opened to me, but only through obedience to the laws of God can I claim my inheritance in the celestial kingdom of my Heavenly Father as a son within his family. I cannot be exalted in my sins, but must work until I overcome them.”

President Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report* (October 1970), 113-118.
“We hear much from some of limited understanding about the possibility of one's being saved by grace alone. But it requires the explanation of another prophet to understand the true doctrine of grace as he explained in these meaningful words: ‘For,’ said this prophet, ‘we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.’ (2 Ne. 25:23) Truly we are redeemed by the atoning blood of the Savior of the world, but only after each has done all he can to work out his own salvation. (Philip. 2:12)”

“The third great distinctive principle in the plan of salvation was the provision that ‘all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.’ (A of F 1:3) These fundamental laws and ordinances by which salvation comes are clearly set forth:

First, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, repentance from sin, meaning the turning away from the sins of disobedience to God's laws and never returning again thereto. The Lord spoke plainly on this point. Said he: '…go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth [meaning, of course, returning again to the sins from which he has repented] shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.' (D&C 82:7)"

Hartman Rector, Jr., *Conference Report* (April 1970), 139-141.
"But repentance is granted unto man by the Lord. (Alma 13:30) I am convinced that repentance is about 90 percent from the Lord and about 10 percent from man. Nephi goes still further and says, '…for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.' (2 Ne. 25:23) However, man's part is the most urgent and vital part because it must be first, and full, and sincere."

Adam S. Bennion, *Conference Report* (April 1957), 115-118.
"So often in discussions men get lost as between faith and grace and works. It is clear that our redemption is made possible by the grace of our Lord and Savior, but it is inconceivable that the greatest gift of God to man can be realized without effort. Such an idea runs counter to the scripture and to every experience we have in life. It squares with reason that when we have done all that we can in and of ourselves (2 Ne. 25:23), then God sublimates our efforts through his mercy."

Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report* (October 1956), 59-63.
"We are saved by grace, yes, through the atonement of the Master, but Nephi taught this other principle: '…for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.'"

Marion D. Hanks, *Conference Report* (October 1956), 13-14.
"For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to he reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do (2 Ne. 25:23)."

"The records of latter-day revelation, as well as those of former days, attest to the great truth that through the atonement of Christ all men will certainly be resurrected, and that all who are willing and obedient may enjoy the blessing of God's great gift of eternal life."

Apostle Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report* (April 1956), 107-111.
"All of these blessings are ours on one condition, and this is spoken of by Nephi, when he said: 'For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, [but mark you this condition,] *after all we can do*.'"

Apostle Marion G. Romney, *Conference Report* (October 1955), 123-125.
"And so I repeat, I am grateful for my Redeemer, grateful that he paid the debt and brought about the means of repentance so that by repenting of my

transgressions I can bring my soul within the reach of his atoning blood and thereby be cleansed of sin; for, after all, it is by the grace of Christ that men are saved, after all they can do (2 Ne. 25:23). The thing they can and must do is repent. I love the doctrine of repentance."

Moroni 10:32

Moroni 10:32 *Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God*.

Jeffrey R. Holland, "Safety for the Soul," *Ensign* (November 2009): 88–90.
"That is the message with which the Book of Mormon begins, and that is the message with which it ends, calling all to 'come unto Christ, and be perfected in him.' 6 [Moroni 10:32] That phrase—taken from Moroni's final lines of testimony, written 1,000 years after Lehi's vision—is a dying man's testimony of the only true way."

Dallin H. Oaks, "All Men Everywhere," *Ensign* (May 2006): 77–80.
"The Book of Mormon also teaches that the great Creator died 'for all men, that all men might become subject unto him' (2 Ne. 9:5). Being subject to our Savior means that if our sins are to be forgiven through His Atonement, we must comply with the conditions He has prescribed, including faith, repentance, and baptism. The fulfillment of these conditions depends on our desires, our choices, and our actions. 'He cometh into the world that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice' (2 Ne. 9:21)."

"The Lord provides a way for all His children, and He desires that each of us come unto Him. In the closing chapter of the Book of Mormon, Moroni pleads: 'Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ' (Moro. 10:32)."

Russell M. Nelson, "Now Is the Time to Prepare," *Ensign* (May 2005): 16.
"Now is the time to show reverent respect for one's physical body. It serves as the tabernacle for one's spirit throughout all eternity. Physical appetites are to be controlled by the will of one's spirit. We are to 'deny [our]selves of all

ungodliness.' 17 [Moro. 10:32; see also 2 Ne. 2:21; Morm. 9:28] We are to 'forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, [and] live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.' [D&C 98:11]"

James E. Faust, "The Atonement: Our Greatest Hope," *Ensign* (November 2001): 18.
"The Atonement advances our mortal course of learning by making it possible for our natures to become perfect. 2 [See Moro. 10:32] All of us have sinned and need to repent to fully pay *our* part of the debt. When we sincerely repent, the Savior's magnificent Atonement pays the *rest* of that debt. 3 [See 2 Ne. 25:23]"

William R. Bradford, "Righteousness," *Ensign* (November 1999): 85.
"The ancient Prophet Moroni, as he ended his work and closed the abridgment of the record of God's dealings with His people, which is the Book of Mormon, said it this way: 'Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ' (Moro. 10:32). Moroni's way of saying do all that you can is to love God with all your might, mind, and strength."

Dallin H. Oaks, "Have You Been Saved?," *Ensign* (May 1998): 55.
"And what is 'all we can do'? It surely includes repentance (see Alma 24:11) and baptism, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. Moroni pleaded, 'Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ' (Moro. 10:32)."

Russell M. Nelson, "Endure and Be Lifted Up," *Ensign* (May 1997): 70.
"Your responsibility to endure is uniquely yours. But you are never alone. I testify that the lifting power of the Lord can be yours if you will 'come unto Christ' and 'be perfected in him.' You will 'deny yourselves of all ungodliness.' And you will 'love God with all your might, mind and strength.' 36 [Moro. 10:32]"

Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Christians in Belief and Action," *Ensign* (November 1996): 70.
"By obeying God's commands, we deny ourselves of all ungodliness. Through obedience motivated by a wholehearted love of God, we come fully unto Christ and allow His grace, through the Atonement, to lead us into perfection. [See Moro. 10:32]"

Neal A. Maxwell, "'Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness'," *Ensign* (May 1995): 6.
"Elsewhere, Moroni declared the need for us to deny ourselves 'all ungodliness' (Moro. 10:32), thus including both large and small sins. While boulders surely block our way, loose gravel slows discipleship, too. Even a small stone can become a stumbling block."

Ezra Taft Benson, "This Is a Day of Sacrifice," *Ensign* (May 1979): 32.
"Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and *deny yourselves of all ungodliness;* and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ (Moro. 10:32; italics added)."

"The Savior himself declared: 'Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and *come unto me* and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day' (3 Ne. 27:20; italics added)."

"To deny oneself of all ungodliness is to come to Christ by ordinances and covenants to repent of any sins which prevent the Spirit of the Lord from taking precedence in our lives. To deny oneself of all ungodliness is to 'offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God…, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit' (D&C 59:8)."

"It is a willingness to forgo personal bad habits such as tobacco, alcohol, profanity, an unruly temper, and immorality—habits which cause us, the children of God, to be less than our destiny."

Bruce R. McConkie, "Be Valiant in the Fight of Faith," *Ensign* (November 1974): 33.
"The great cornerstone of valiance in the cause of righteousness is obedience to the whole law of the whole gospel."

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'come unto Christ, and be perfected in him'; it is to deny ourselves 'of all ungodliness,' and 'love God' with all our 'might, mind and strength.' (Moro. 10:32)"

Moroni 10:32-33

Moroni 10:32-33 *Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God*. *32 And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot*.

John M. Madsen, "A 12-Year-Old Deacon," *Ensign* (May 2008): 55–57.
"That each one of us, as sons of God, 22 [Psalm 82:6; Hosea 1:10; Romans 8:16–17; Hebrews 12:9; D&C 11:30; 35:2; Moses 6:68] can fulfill our mission and destiny is made plain by these words of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith: 'Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments … may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fullness.' 23 [D&C 93:1, 19; see also John 14:6; D&C 76:92–95; 2 Nephi 31:7–16; 3 Nephi 12:48; 27:27; Moroni 10:32–33]"

David A. Bednar, "Clean Hands and a Pure Heart," *Ensign* (November 2007): 80–83.
"The requirement to put off the natural man and become a saint, to avoid and overcome bad and to do and become good, to have clean hands and a pure heart, is a recurring theme throughout the Book of Mormon. In fact, Moroni's concluding invitation at the end of the book is a summary of this theme."

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ."

"And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the *remission of your sins,* that *ye become holy, without spot* (Moroni 10:32–33; emphasis added)."

Russell M. Nelson, "Perfection Pending," *Ensign* (November 1995): 86.
"The *perfect* man described in Paul's quotation is the completed person—*teleios*—the glorified soul!"

“Moroni taught how to gain this glorious objective. His instruction stands in any age as an antidote for depression and a prescription for joy. I echo his plea: ‘Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; … love God with all your might, mind and strength … [Then] ye may be perfect in Christ, … holy, [and] without spot.’ 39 [Moro. 10:32–33]”

“Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, let us do the best we can and try to improve each day. When our imperfections appear, we can keep trying to correct them. We can be more forgiving of flaws in ourselves and among those we love. We can be comforted and forbearing. The Lord taught, ‘Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now…; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected.’ 40 [D&C 67:13]”

“We need not be dismayed if our earnest efforts toward perfection now seem so arduous and endless. Perfection is pending. It can come in full only after the Resurrection and only through the Lord. It awaits all who love him and keep his commandments.”

D. **Todd Christofferson, “As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten,” *Ensign* (November 2011): 100**.
“All of us can meet God’s high expectations, however great or small our capacity and talent may be. Moroni affirms, ‘If ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is [God’s] grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ’ (Moroni 10:32). It is a diligent, devoted effort on our part that calls forth this empowering and enabling grace, an effort that certainly includes submission to God’s chastening hand and sincere, unqualified repentance.”

APPENDIX 3

OUTLINE OF LESSON TAUGHT TO GROUP A

I. Hallmarks of a Christian Theology of Grace

A. Background contour of grace

a. The Human Predicament due to the Fall

i. Loss of fellowship with God

ii. Sin nature

b. The Nature of a Covenant

i. Nature of a Covenant

ii. God's Unconditional Covenant God makes with Abraham

iii. God's Conditional Covenant with Humankind

B. Hallmarks of a Christian theology of grace

1. Covenant is Unconditional
2. Enter Covenant by Faith in Christ
3. God's grace through the atonement is sufficient for eternal life

II. Traditional LDS Conception of Grace

A. Background contour of grace

i. The Human Predicament (pre and post Fall)

a. Pre-Fall

1. Immortal
2. Intimacy with God
3. Innocent: No capacity for good or evil, Joy or Sorrow
4. Incapable of being fruitful and multiplying

b. Post-Fall

1. Mortal
2. Estranged from God (First Spiritual Death)
3. Capable of choosing good and evil (Joy and sorrow)
4. Capable of bearing fruit (children)

ii. Second Spiritual Death- due to individual sin

B. The Atonement

i. Unconditional- brings healing to first two points of post-Fall predicament to all humans

ii. Conditional- Brings healing to Second Spiritual Death (and thus brings eternal life) conditioned on:

a. Faith in Christ
b. Repentance
c. Baptism
d. Receiving the Holy Spirit
e. Observing the ordinances of the church
f. Keeping the commandments of the Lord.

C. Hallmarks of the Traditional LDS theology of Grace

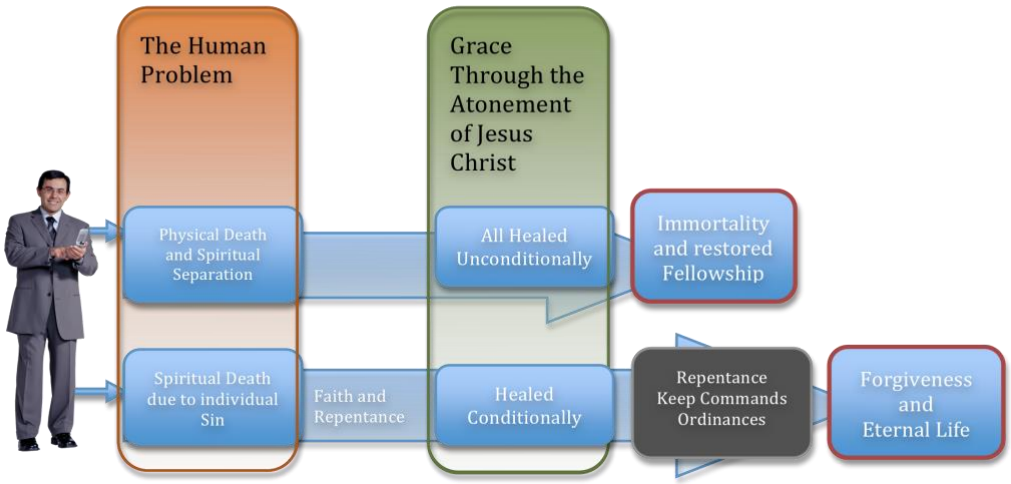
1. Conditional Atonement

2. Insufficiency of faith in Christ for eternal life
3. Perfect Repentance
4. Perfect Obedience

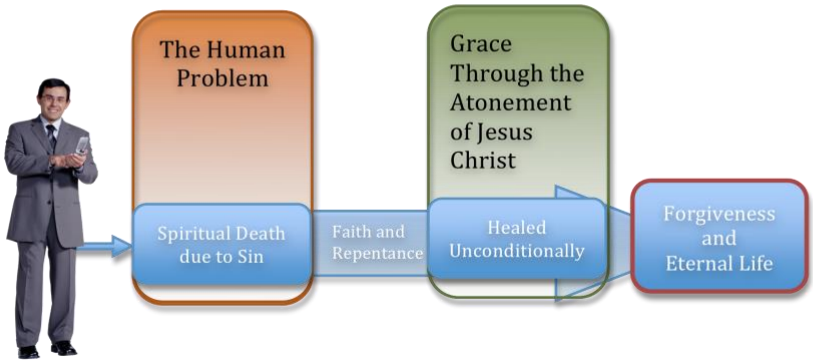
APPENDIX 4

VISUAL AID

LDS Grace


The Human Problem
Grace Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ
Physical Death and Spiritual Separation
All Healed Unconditionally
Immortality and restored Fellowship
Spiritual Death due to individual Sin
Faith and Repentance
Healed Conditionally
Repentance Keep Commands Ordinances
Forgiveness and Eternal Life

Traditional Christian Grace


The Human Problem
Grace Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ
Spiritual Death due to Sin
Faith and Repentance
Healed Unconditionally
Forgiveness and Eternal Life

APPENDIX 5

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Group A (Christians in a classroom setting)

I. Preliminary Questions

Please answer the following questions before beginning the training session.

1. Have you ever shared the gospel with a non-Christian?
2. Have you ever shared the gospel with a LDS member?
3. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident would you feel in sharing the gospel with a non-Christian?
4. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident would you feel in sharing the gospel with a Latter-day Saint (LDS) member?
5. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident are you in explaining the difference between the LDS and Christian understandings of grace?

II. Post-Training Questions

Having participated in the training session, please answer the following questions.

1. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident would you feel in sharing the gospel with a non-Christian?
2. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident would you feel in sharing the gospel with a Latter-day Saint (LDS) member?
3. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least helpful and 5 being the most helpful, how helpful do you believe a visual aid like the one presented in the training session would be in sharing the gospel with an LDS member?

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being less likely and 5 being much more likely, how much more or less likely would you be if you had a visual aid like the one presented in the training session to you?
5. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident are you in explaining the difference between the LDS and Christian understandings of grace?

Questionnaire #2: Group B (LDS members in a public setting)

I. Preliminary Questions

1. Are you currently a member of the LDS church? (Yes or No)
2. Have you ever shared your testimony with a non-LDS member? (Yes or No)
3. Has a traditional Christian ever personally shared his or her version of the gospel with you? (Yes or No)
4. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident would you be in explaining the difference between the LDS and Christian understandings of grace?
5. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very dissimilar and 5 being very similar, how similar or dissimilar do you understand the LDS and traditional Christian gospels to be?
6. What is the greatest influence on how you view grace as it pertains to eternal life?

II. Post-Presentation Questions

1. Do you feel that the presentation, including the visual aid, correctly represented the LDS position on grace and its relation to eternal life? (Yes or No). If no, what specifically about it did you not agree with?
2. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident would you be in explaining the difference between the LDS and Christian understandings of grace?
3. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very dissimilar and 5 being very similar, how similar or dissimilar do you understand the LDS and traditional Christian gospels to be?

APPENDIX 6

OUTLINE OF GROUP B PRESENTATION

I. Traditional Christian Theology of Justifying Grace

A. Traditional Christian Theology of Grace Explained

1. God created us all, and we are accountable to him (Hebrews 4:13).
2. All have sinned, and thus, without the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, no one will ever take hold of eternal life (Romans 3:23-24).
3. God acted in Jesus Christ to atone for our sins, thereby becoming the means to eternal life to all who would enter into his covenant (Rom. 3:25).
4. The Nature of a Covenant
    a. Nature of a Covenant: God enters into covenants with humans. A covenant involves two parties, and gives benefits to one party based on their obedience to the terms of the covenant.
    b. God's Unconditional Covenant: Genesis 15. God makes a covenant with Abraham, and in that covenant he offers Abraham righteousness and makes no demands on Abraham (unconditional). Abraham enters into that covenant by faith (Romans 4:1-5).
    c. God's Unconditional Covenant with Humankind. (Romans 4:9,12, Eph. 2:8, Romans 3:28).
5. Enter covenant by repenting of our sins, and placing faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins.

B. Conclusion: Faith in God's grace through the atonement is **necessary** and **sufficient** for eternal life.

II. LDS Theology of Justifying Grace

A. LDS Theology of Grace Explained

1. Atonement has both unconditional and conditional aspects.
    a. ***Unconditional***- brings resurrection to every human.
    b. ***Conditional***- Brings healing from individual sin.
2. Conditional blessings of the atonement (eternal life) conditioned on:
    a. Faith in Christ.
    b. Repentance: “By this ye may know if a man repents of his sins -- behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:43).
    c. Baptism.
    d. Receiving the Holy Spirit (laying on of hands).
    e. Observing the ordinances of the church.
    f. Keeping the commandments of the Lord.

B. Conclusion: faith in Jesus is necessary, but not sufficient for eternal life (Contra 1 John 5:11-13, John 3:16, etc.).

APPENDIX 7

SURVEY RESULTS

Group A Results

Total Surveyed: 42

- Shared Gospel with a non-Christian:
  - Yes: 42 (100%)
  - No: 0 (0%)

- Shared the Gospel with an LDS Member:
  - Yes: 25 (60%)
  - No: 17 (40%)

- Confidence in sharing Gospel with a non-Christian:
  - Increase: 6 (14%)
  - Decrease: 0
  - Same: 36 (86%)

- Confidence in sharing Gospel with LDS member:
  - Increase: 21 (50%)
  - Decrease: 0
  - Same: 21 (50%)

- Explain the difference of the role of grace in salvation:
  - Increase: 25 (60%)
  - Decrease: 1 (2%)
  - Same: 16 (38%)

- Visual Aid Helpful:
  - Helpful: 26 (62%)
  - Not Helpful: 1 (2)

  Neutral: 15 (36%)

- More likely to share Gospel with LDS if you had a visual Aid handy:
    - More: 23 (55%)
    - Less: 0 (0%)
    - Neither: 19 (45%)

Group B Results:

Total Surveyed: 68

- Confidence in explaining the difference:
    - Confidence increased: 34 (50%)
    - Confidence did not increase: 34 (50%)
- Degree of Similarity:
    - Now believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be more different than before: 10 (15%)
    - Believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be the same or less different than before: 58 (85%)

LDS Members Surveyed: 48 (70%)

- Yes- accurately represented their view of atonement: 41 (85%)
    - Confidence explaining the difference:
        - Confidence increased: 21 (51%)
        - Confidence did not increase: 20 (49%)
    - Degree of Similarity:
        - Now believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be more different than before: 6 (15%)
        - Believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be the same or less different than before: 35 (85%)
- No- did not accurately represent their view of atonement: 7 (19.4%)
    - Confidence explaining the difference:
        - Confidence increased: 1 (14%)
        - Confidence did not increase: 6 (86%)
    - Degree of Similarity
        - Now believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be more different than before: 0 (0%)
        - Believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be the same or less different than before: 7 (100%)

Non-LDS Members (20) (30%)

- Confidence explaining the difference:

- Confidence increased: 12 (60%)

Confidence did not increase: 8 (40%)

- Degree of Similarity:
  - Now believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be more different than before: 4 (20%)
  - Believe LDS and traditional Christianity to be the same or less different than before: 16 (80%)

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